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**Working in Concert**  
**Federal, Provincial and Territorial Actions**  
**in Support of Literacy in Canada**



National Literacy Secretariat  
Secrétariat national à l'alphabétisation

**Canada**

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**Federal, Provincial and Territorial Actions**  
**in Support of Literacy in Canada**

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Edited by

*Words That Matter Inc.*

Joanne Godin

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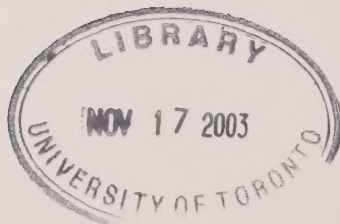
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## Foreward

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At the June 4, 1994 Provincial-Territorial Literacy Consultation hosted by Manitoba, the National Literacy Secretariat with the provinces and territories, committed to work together to produce a document that would provide a current profile of literacy activities in Canada.

**Working in Concert - Federal, Provincial and Territorial Actions in Support of Literacy in Canada** is the result of several drafts that accommodated departmental restructuring, program innovation and staff changes that occurred in the provinces and territories over the past year. It provides a snapshot of literacy programs and activities in Canada for 1995 - 96.

The NLS, and provincial and territorial representatives attending the 1996 Provincial-Territorial Literacy Consultation hosted by Saskatchewan in June reviewed the final draft and agreed that:

- the National Literacy Secretariat distribute the 1996 document to literacy organizations and service providers in Canada, and that a hard copy be made available to others upon request;
- the document be posted on the NALD (National Adult Literacy Database) for public access;
- the document be *electronically updated annually*, and that each province and territory be responsible for providing their annual update by May 1st to the NALD network; and
- that all future updated documents be accessed through NALD electronically and that printed requests be made available through NALD on a fee-for-service basis.

The document, we believe, will aid many in understanding the scope and variety of literacy programs and services available throughout Canada. It further provides insight into the commitment of governments, service providers and volunteers in helping others to acquire and advance their literacy skills.

Participants at the 1996 Interprovincial-Territorial Literacy Consultation would like to thank *Joanne Godin* from *Words That Matter, Inc.*, for the many hours of consultation spent with provincial and territorial representatives in editing and producing the publication.

*The 1996 Provincial-Territorial Literacy Consultation Planning Group*







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## The National Literacy Secretariat

### Flexible Responses to Meet the Diverse Needs of a Nation

International Adult Literacy Survey			
Prose Reading Levels: Canada— 21,307,893 adults aged 16 and over			
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Levels 4 & 5
Can locate one piece of information in a simple text, with clear instructions	Can locate information in a more complex text and follow instructions to compare or contrast information	Can integrate information from several texts to respond to stated requirements	Can interpret information in complex, lengthy, and detailed texts
22%	26%	33%	20%

The National Literacy Secretariat (the NLS) works with its partners across the country to promote the value of literacy and lifelong learning as primary forces for achieving personal well-being. Literacy is fundamental. It enables individuals to improve the quality of their lives by giving them greater access to employment, the ability to earn an adequate income, the means to find out about and understand their own safety and health needs, and the security of having some measure of control over their fate. Literacy is the gateway to powerful citizenship, social involvement, cultural expression and economic well-being.

Because of its dynamism and relevance to many aspects of social and economic life, literacy crosses many boundaries. It is of concern to people working in disciplines as diverse as education, social policy, economics, health, and workplace safety. It crosses political jurisdictions too, not only in Canada, but internationally as well. The NLS is active on all of these fronts, working with partners in various disciplines, in every province and territory, and internationally.



## **The International Adult Literacy Survey**

Canada and six other industrial countries recognized literacy's boundary-crossing dimension as they worked together to measure the literacy skills of their populations and to understand the impact of the distribution of these skills in each country. Canada's experience in innovative literacy research led to a leadership role in the study. The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) was carried out in 1994. Some results were released in 1995; detailed results for each country—Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States—will be published in 1996.

While Canada had conducted ground-breaking work on literacy in the past, this effort raised literacy research to a new level. It demonstrated that literacy affects economic and social well-being in all cultures and languages. The importance of the findings lies not so much in the differences among countries, but in the similarities. The survey demonstrated that, in industrial countries, higher levels of literacy lead to higher incomes and less unemployment. The survey also confirmed what Canadians have long known: that new employment opportunities are being created in the most literate occupations and that job opportunities in occupations requiring lower literacy skills are in decline.

## **What is Literacy?**

One area in which the NLS has helped Canada and other countries advance in their understanding of literacy has been to put forward the idea that literacy is not an absolute. In the past, many researchers and policy makers had considered literacy as 'the ability to read and write.' This implied that literacy was a discrete goal that one could achieve by gaining certain knowledge and by learning a specific set of skills. This perception of literacy ignores the fact that one can always improve one's literacy skills and advance from basic literacy levels to intermediate and advanced levels.

The NLS supports the idea that literacy is a continuum. It is not enough just to know the alphabet and to be able to read and write sentences in a basic textbook. Being literate is a function of one's ability to meet the demands typically faced in a given society. The IALS survey followed this approach and defined literacy as:

**Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.**

This approach measures individuals' literacy skills as a function of what they *can* do, not as a measure of a deficit in their prior learning. It acknowledges that most people in industrial societies know their alphabet and can recognize familiar words and phrases in a simple context. It also reflects an understanding that, to function as an independent and adaptable



person, individuals in industrial societies need literacy skills that enable them to interpret complex information and use it in a variety of ways in their lives.

## **The Mandate of the National Literacy Secretariat**

The NLS was created in 1987 as a unit within the Department of the Secretary of State. Its creation had been announced in the October 1, 1986 Speech from the Throne, in which the federal government pledged to:

...work with provinces, the private sector, and voluntary organizations to develop resources to ensure that Canadians have access to the literacy skills that are the pre-requisite for participation in our advanced economy.

The Secretariat's mandate is broad enough to enable it to complement the work of the provinces and territories and raise the profile of literacy in the country. Consistent with the theme expressed in the government's first commitment to a national program for literacy, the Secretariat's objective is to:

Promote literacy as an essential component for a learning society and to make Canada's social, economic and political life more accessible to people with weak literacy skills.

The National Literacy Secretariat respects the provinces' and territories' jurisdiction for education and mandate to deliver literacy training to Canadians with low literacy skills. The Secretariat's role is to support and advance that work by acting as a catalyst or facilitator for literacy in Canada. The NLS gives the lead for priority-setting and project design to experts in local communities, business and labour groups, and organizations serving members of groups with particular needs in literacy training. In this way, the NLS believes that it has been able to foster action on literacy in areas that count to Canadians.

## **Structure of the NLS**

Administratively, the NLS is a part of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), the department responsible for workforce development, labour relations in federally regulated industries, and the administration of the Employment Insurance program. This connection to workforce programs enables the NLS to influence federal policies for workers and job seekers and to ensure that literacy development is a part of all human resources strategies.

While the NLS is housed within HRDC, the Minister responsible for the NLS is not the Minister of HRDC but Joyce Fairbairn, Minister with special responsibility for Literacy. That Cabinet post was introduced in 1993 to signal the government's commitment to creating a foundation of literacy for Canada's economic, political, cultural and social growth. At the same time, as a further demonstration of the federal commitment to literacy, the government

restored the NLS's budget to the levels it had before a series of government-wide program cuts had been implemented.

## Principles

The NLS has set the following principles for its program work:

### *Partnerships*

The NLS is committed to continuing the concept of partnerships to expand the role of all players, including the provinces and territories, business, labour and voluntary sector groups.

### *Cost-sharing*

In keeping with the concept of partnerships, contributions should be made by both parties.

### *Flexibility*

The NLS recognizes the need for flexibility and, in its Federal-Provincial/Territorial program, negotiates arrangements that reflect differences in the needs, goals and delivery systems of each region.

### *Multi-faceted approach*

The NLS recognizes the usefulness and importance of a variety of approaches, including institution- and community-based programming and voluntary programs.

## Partnerships are the Key

The NLS supports work ranging from community activities that respond to the very particular needs of small groups of learners, to national undertakings to advance the state of theoretical research on literacy. By responding to community priorities, a strategy that has been described as an effort to 'Let a thousand flowers bloom,' the NLS has been able to strengthen literacy work at all levels and among all groups in society. It has looked to its partners—the provinces and territories, national and regional literacy organizations, non-literacy and volunteer organizations, business, labour, and multicultural and aboriginal communities—for leadership in identifying what efforts should be supported with the always-limited resources available.

*'The NLS is a catalyst and has helped to create an infrastructure for literacy. The NLS respected the province's individuality and helped us to develop our own way.'*

*—Provincial government partner,  
interviewed for a 1995 evaluation  
of the NLS*

The response of these partners, as demonstrated by their financial contributions to projects, has been significant and has increased over time. A 1995 evaluation of the National Literacy Secretariat found that, while the NLS had contributed an average of 58 percent of projects' budgets in 1988/89, its contribution represented about 30 percent of project budgets in the 1990s. The balance of project budgets was provided by the NLS's partners: NLS-supported projects have an average of 2.5 partners, who contribute an average of \$42,000 for each project.

## **Activities supported by the NLS**

The NLS focuses its work on policy and program areas that, historically, have not been a significant part of provincial and territorial programming. These five activity areas are:

### ***Developing learning materials***

In the belief that the most effective learning materials are those that are relevant to the everyday reality of learners, the NLS supports the development of a variety of Canadian learning materials in many media, including manuals and literacy guides, training workshops for tutors, and innovative materials such as multi-media packages.

### ***Increasing public awareness***

The NLS supports public awareness activities to, for example, promote an understanding of literacy issues, encourage Canadians to work to find solutions to these issues, and increase the number of literacy volunteers, tutors and learners, and the amount of resources dedicated to literacy.

### ***Carrying out research***

The NLS seeks to promote research that provides baseline information on literacy, explores relevant issues and supports program development, identifies target-group and workplace needs for literacy training, tests ways to prevent literacy problems, and that evaluates literacy programs.

### ***Improving access and outreach***

The NLS supports innovative efforts to make literacy programs more accessible, to reduce barriers to learners' participation, and to find ways to reach people who could benefit from literacy training.

### ***Improving coordination and information sharing***

To prevent duplication and to improve the effectiveness with which literacy resources are allocated, the NLS supports information-sharing activities such as conferences, and coordinating mechanisms such as regional resource centres. It also supports the creation of new tools and networks, such as the development of directories and hot lines, for example.



There are four grant and contribution activities:

- The Federal-Provincial/Territorial Program
- The Literacy Component of The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS)
- The Literacy Corps Program
- The National Program

Each of these activities is described below.

### **The Federal-Provincial/Territorial Program**

Before the creation of the National Literacy Secretariat in 1987, only a few provinces had literacy programs, although all offered Adult Basic Education programs. The Federal-Provincial/Territorial Program, through its matched-funding strategy, has helped to ensure that there is now literacy programming in all the provinces and territories.

The NLS's arrangements with the provinces and territories vary greatly, depending on the province or territory's program delivery system, its literacy strategy, and the human and financial resources it has available. Provinces such as Ontario, with literacy programs established long before the creation of the Secretariat, have worked with the NLS to fill in programming gaps. Other provinces have established partnerships with the NLS to form new literacy programs. All of the provinces and territories allocate literacy budgets that at least match NLS funding, and some provide substantially more—up to six times more—than the total of the NLS provincial allocation.

The Federal-Provincial/Territorial Program brings NLS activity to the community level. While responding to local needs, these projects all contribute to the achievement of the NLS's national objectives. For the community groups and the multitude of other organizations that operate NLS-supported projects, the Program provides for simplified and streamlined administration: organizations apply for funding either through their provincial government literacy office or jointly with the NLS.

The variety of projects supported under the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Program is demonstrated in the descriptions of cost-shared projects in each province and territory that are included in the literacy profiles that follow.

### **The Literacy Component of The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS)**

The Literacy Component of The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy addresses one of the most basic needs of many individuals affected by the downturn in the Atlantic fishery. Statistics show that literacy rates are lowest in Atlantic Canada and lowest of all in Newfoundland. The component encourages communities to work together to identify their literacy needs and to develop innovative ways to address those needs. The Literacy Component of TAGS was assumed by the NLS in 1994 and is scheduled to end in 1999.



## **The Literacy Corps Program**

The Literacy Corps Program was also transferred to the National Literacy Secretariat, from the Employment Group of Human Resources Development Canada, in 1994. This program works to address the needs of young people aged 16 to 24 who are not in school, through project funding to organizations. The program emphasizes the training of peer tutors in effective strategies to teach young people.

## **The National Program**

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Through the National Program, the National Literacy Secretariat supports projects of national interest carried out by voluntary and not-for-profit organizations representing the literacy community, business, labour, social services, and academe. The National Program is recognized as having a role in promoting the use of best practices, because each organization and region can build on the successes of others across the country. It is also an important source of support for original research on literacy and related issues, and expands the NLS's partnerships.

In addition, the NLS provides funding to five national literacy groups, to support their work in training, building literacy networks, or holding conferences. These organizations are:

- Frontier College
- La Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en Français
- Laubach Literacy of Canada
- The Movement for Canadian Literacy
- ABC Canada

A sixth organization supported by the NLS, the National Adult Literacy Data Base (NALD), provides a communication network and a central clearinghouse of information for individuals, organizations and policy makers. Launched in 1989, NALD is based at Scovil House in Fredericton, New Brunswick. It contains information on approximately 4,600 literacy programs, activities and services across Canada and is accessible to subscribers through the Internet. NALD provides subscribers with access to other services and databases in North America and overseas. It also gathers, sorts, stores and makes available information on resources, contacts, events, awards and funding sources, and, in response to client requests, analyzes demographic, program and other literacy-related information.

A sampling of National Program projects, under each of the NLS's activity areas, is described below.

## Developing Learning Materials

Literacy experts interviewed for the 1995 evaluation of the National Literacy Secretariat stated that, before the NLS was created, there were few, if any, good Canadian learning materials. The evaluation found that there are now many good Canadian materials, including much developed for groups overlooked in the past, and that the NLS has supported the development of most of these materials.

Part of the reason for the paucity of learning materials before the NLS began supporting this work is that the literacy market is small compared to that for materials prepared for elementary, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions. As a result, there has been little financial incentive for the private sector to develop materials for literacy learners. Some of the projects supported by the NLS in 1995/96, for example, developed learning materials for adults with a disability, Aboriginal learners, and health care workers who wish to improve their ability to communicate clearly, verbally and in writing, with adults who have varying levels of literacy skills.

### *Materials for adult learners with physical disabilities*

In 1990, with NLS support, North Vancouver's Capilano College, a pioneer in the field of literacy, and the Neil Squire Foundation, a world leader in the development of technology for people with physical disabilities, developed a Speech-Assisted Reading and Writing (SARAW) program. SARAW is a talking computer program designed to help teach basic literacy skills to adults who have severe physical disabilities and who are non-verbal. The program can be set up in organizations anywhere and enables these adults to learn independently.

In 1995, the two SARAW partners set out to develop a Speech-Assisted Mathematics (SAM) program for this group of learners. They began by determining these learners' specific needs in mathematics skills, then began developing the software, which they will test and revise before making it widely available. The project will also include the development of a teacher's manual to accompany the program.

### *Materials for Aboriginal learners*

The First Nations Confederacy on Education and Culture recognized that most of the literacy materials currently available for Aboriginal learners were print-based. They pointed out that print materials alone may be inappropriate for adults who have traditionally used oral forms of communication. The group had produced other top quality video and print resources and, in 1996, obtained NLS support to develop a multi-media kit, including a video-tape and supporting materials, for groups interested in developing community-based literacy programs for First Nations and Métis adult learners. Under the guidance of a literacy project committee, and with the support of extensive research, a script writer and other team

members will create the kit. The Confederacy will also solicit corporate sponsorships for the project.

### ***Clear Communications in the health profession***

The Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) found that, when health providers provide plain language information to patients, the patients follow the instructions 50 percent more often. In this way, simple instructions and easy-to-read health information help to improve the health of Canadians. It was with this in mind that the CPHA is developing a training package on plain language and clear verbal communications skills for health professionals. In 1997, with the support of the NLS, the CPHA will consult with its health partners, with literacy groups and plain language specialists, to develop the resources and strategies to be used in the training package. The Association also plans to develop a distribution plan to ensure that the package would reach the greatest possible number of health providers and health educators across the country.

### **Increasing public awareness**

The 1995 evaluation of the National Literacy Secretariat showed that the Secretariat had been successful in raising public awareness about literacy and increasing the accessibility of literacy training for groups, such as Aboriginal people, members of linguistic minority groups, and offenders, who had had problems gaining access to literacy training in the past. Some of the ways that the NLS has collaborated with its partners to increase public awareness about literacy are described below.

#### ***ABC Canada***

The NLS worked with a number of private sector groups, including the Business Task Force on Literacy, the Speakers Bureau, and the Public Policy Forum dinners, to establish ABC Canada as a means to encourage private sector support for literacy. The Secretariat provides ongoing financial support for the administration of this organization. The organization's Board of Directors includes representatives from these groups, some of which have folded into ABC Canada. The organization is dedicated to raising public awareness about literacy and to providing expert advice and assistance to the private sector about workplace literacy. This strategy brings literacy training to manufacturing plants, hospitals, offices, construction sites, indeed any workplace where the employer and workers want to create opportunities to improve employees' skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

In 1995, with NLS support, ABC Canada held a 'think tank' of educators and representatives of labour and business organizations to produce a discussion paper outlining principles of good practices in workplace education.



ABC Canada has created many innovative measures to highlight the importance of literacy to Canadians. It worked with Tele-Direct and other sponsors, for example, to create a high-profile television and print advertising campaign to reach people who may need literacy training. The creative work, television air time and advertising space were donated by the participating companies.

### *The Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournaments*

Peter Gzowski established the invitational golf tournaments that bear his name (the PGIs) ten years ago. His goal of raising \$1 million for literacy was exceeded in the sixth season of the tournaments, and they have raised a total of \$4 million. In 1995, 14 PGIs were held across Canada. The tournaments are coordinated by the ABC Canada Literacy Foundation, and national sponsors in 1995 included Canada Post, Petro Canada, Superior Propane, the Royal Bank of Canada, Air Canada and Cooperators. The tournaments are the single most successful fundraising strategy for literacy in Canada and all of the proceeds are provided to literacy organizations in the communities across the country that sponsored the tournaments. In 1995, the total raised was \$626,000, of which \$184,850 was donated by the national sponsors.

### *Family literacy*

Frontier College offers a Family Learning Program with the support of the National Literacy Secretariat. The program, which involves parents and care-givers in reading circles that promote the fundamental value of reading, had been known in previous years as Read Canada. The Family Literacy Program aims to ensure that parents and other caregivers read with their children and that children have access to books at home and in the community. It makes particular efforts to reach families in inner-city areas, on reserves and in subsidized housing. It also encourages social and cultural institutions that serve children and families to introduce reading activities in their programs.

### **Conducting research on literacy**

Since its inception in 1987, the National Literacy Secretariat has helped to advance significantly the state of research on literacy in Canada. In that same year, the Southam News Co. had commissioned a detailed study of Canadians' literacy skills. The results of that survey, indicating that many Canadians did not have reading skills adequate to meet the demands of everyday life, led to calls for more detailed information. The NLS responded by commissioning Statistics Canada to undertake a comprehensive national survey of Canadians' literacy skills.



### ***The Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Everyday Activities***

The Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities (LSUDA) was designed to provide a detailed literacy profile of the Canadian population. The LSUDA tested 9,500 individuals on a set of tasks, ranging from locating the expiry date on a driver's licence, to consulting a chart to determine if an employee is eligible for a particular benefit. The LSUDA showed that, while 16 percent of Canadians had low literacy skills that keep them from dealing with anything more than basic written information, another 22 percent of Canadians had some level of difficulty with written materials. This information provided a baseline of data that will allow Canadians to assess our progress in advancing literacy.

### ***Seminal research on francophone literacy***

Until the release of the results of the LSUDA, there had been little study of literacy levels among French-speaking Canadians in Quebec and across the country. One of the earliest research studies supported by the NLS was an analysis by the Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes [Canadian institute for adult education] and the Fédération des francophones hors Québec [federation of francophones outside Quebec] of the issues surrounding francophone literacy. The report on that study was released in 1989 and included more detail from the Southam Literacy Survey. Those results showed that there was a gap between the literacy levels of French- and English-speaking Canadians.

The study of francophone literacy provided the first available information on francophone literacy in every province and territory of Canada. This seminal work led to the creation of the Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français [the Canadian federation for francophone literacy].

### ***The International Adult Literacy Survey***

In the early 1990s, Canada was invited to act as the lead country for the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), a seven-country effort to measure the literacy skills of adults in participating industrial countries. With the NLS and HRDC's Applied Research Branch as sponsors, Statistics Canada worked with the U.S. Educational Testing Service to develop the survey design.

The IALS study was carried out in the autumn of 1994, as almost 21,000 individuals were tested in Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. In Canada, 3,130 English-speaking adults and 1,370 French-speaking adults were interviewed and tested. An interim report on the study was released in December 1995 and a detailed report on the Canadian results will be released in 1996. Canada's detailed report will give information on the literacy levels of previously under-examined populations, including members of visible minority groups, seniors, recent graduates, young people who are not attending school, and francophones living outside Quebec. It will also provide important data

on the relationship between literacy levels and the economy. The IALS study may also serve as a model to help researchers measure literacy levels in developing countries where concern over illiteracy is being replaced with concern about developing strategies to address low literacy.

### **Improving access and outreach**

The National Literacy Secretariat follows the adult education adage, 'Take the programs to the people.' It supports innovative actions by literacy and non-literacy organizations, employers and labour unions, to bring literacy training to the home and work environments that are part of individuals' daily lives.

### ***Laubach Literacy and families***

In 1995, for example, Laubach Literacy of Canada launched a family learning and literacy workshop to help break the cycle of illiteracy by teaching families how to develop a learning culture in the home. Each three-hour workshop was held on an evening or weekend. A trainer from Laubach's national office hosted each workshop, using visual aids and learning materials, and inviting a literacy student to speak about his or her home learning experiences and the importance of becoming a reader.

Each workshop used resources such as *Born to Read*, by Ben Wicks, and the book of word games, *Playing with Words* by Margie Golick. Some of the workshops included presentations from Laubach's Books for Babies program, such as the 'Look, Learn, Language and Listen' activities for children under two years of age. Others emphasized the importance of the home as the first place of learning and the role of parents as teaching partners. Participants talked about how games, family discussions, and parents' being involved in children's activities all support children's interest in learning to read and write.

Workshops were held across the country and participants were enthusiastic. Participants at a workshop in Laval, Quebec, for example, expressed their pleasure in attending a workshop for the first time. They said that they were happy to have had an opportunity to express their ideas and share their personal experiences.

### ***Literacy and industry***

Many industries are changing their work methods and placing greater literacy demands on workers, and the grocery products industry is no exception. In recognition of this fact, the Canadian Grocery Producers Council (CGPC) sought and received NLS support to launch a Basic Skills Program in the autumn of 1996. The program, which is supported by the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, seeks to raise awareness of the value of training and to promote a training culture in the industry.

About a quarter of a million Canadians work in some sector of this industry, which includes the processing and production of meat, poultry, dairy, cereal grains and fruit and vegetables and the preparation of packaged foods and non-food products. The CGPC began by surveying employers and employees about the need for basic skills training. This research showed that more employees are expected to provide written reports on production and work processes, and that a number of employees are having difficulty meeting these literacy demands.

The Basic Skills Program will offer employees opportunities to improve their skills in reading, writing, mathematics and computer use.

### ***Workplace Education Manitoba***

As the workplace changes, workplace education is a concern for workers, employers and governments across the country. In Manitoba in 1991, the provincial Literacy Office, in consultation with the National Literacy Secretariat, brought together business, labour and government to create Workplace Education Manitoba, an organization dedicated to helping people keep pace with the changes.

The organization is coordinated by the Manitoba Literacy Office. It helps employers and workers' representatives cooperate to conduct assessments of the mathematical and communication needs of a particular workplace and to create customized programs to upgrade workers' skills to meet those needs. The organization has helped a variety of industries conduct innovative projects to improve workers' skills and help them deal with workplace challenges. Members of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union are receiving literacy upgrading classes, for example, and their collective agreement is being re-written in clear language to enable employees to fully understand their rights and benefits.

### ***Sharing the Vision***

The 2,800 members of the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) have made the link between literacy and vision a priority. They are committed to raising awareness of the relationship between literacy and vision, but they are doing much more than raising awareness. For one day each September, CAO members across the country offer free eye examinations and free eye glasses to people enrolled in literacy or upgrading programs, who earn below a certain income but who do not receive social assistance. (Social assistance programs cover these costs for recipients.)

The time donated by the Doctors of Optometry is complemented by donations of cash, products and services by the ophthalmic community and the Optical Labs Association. The diagnostic and treatment services are provided at no charge to provincial and territorial health insurance programs or any other insurer.



For the 1995 campaign, the CAO expected that its members would examine 18,000 people and provide glasses to 12,000 learners. While the NLS contributed to the 1995 Sharing the Vision campaign, the CAO indicated that it would cover the costs of future campaigns without requiring assistance from the Secretariat.

## **Improving coordination and information-sharing**

The National Literacy Secretariat supports a number of national efforts to share information and coordinate the activities of literacy and other organizations across the country. It also sponsors efforts by organizations to share their expertise with others working in related areas.

### ***Learners with intellectual disabilities***

The Roeher Institute received support from the National Literacy Secretariat in 1995 to prepare a report and guide called *Literacy in Motion*, to help literacy programs meet the needs of learners with intellectual disabilities. The report pointed out that there are a number of barriers that have traditionally excluded these learners from literacy programs, but that there are important reasons to make literacy training accessible to them. The guide offers strategies for literacy programs and instructors to attract these learners to their programs and adapt teaching strategies to respond to their learning methods.

The guide discusses the experiences of literacy tutors who have taught adults with intellectual and other disabilities. While acknowledging that many literacy providers assume that adults with an intellectual disability do not have the ability to develop literacy skills that can help them make a difference in their lives, the guide points out that many tutors have had very positive experiences with these learners. One tutor tells the story of a man in his 50s who cannot speak and had not had the opportunity to learn an alternate means of communication. He had been attending a sheltered workshop for many years:

He is learning to print his first name but he has an additional challenge because of his hand tremors. In order to hold the pen he has to stop his hand from shaking, which he does by using the other one to poke the pen in position. Then he tries to form the letters. He keeps this up for one hour and a half each time we meet. If I had any questions about his determination in the beginning, I soon realized how much he personally hungered for the intellectual stimulation.

## **Other National Activities**

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In addition to the grants and contributions it makes to organizations through its National Program, the National Literacy Secretariat uses its operational budget to support activities of national interest and importance. It has supported efforts, for example, to make written materials more accessible to people with varying levels of literacy skills, by encouraging



business, governments and others to use plain language in materials destined for the general public.

In 1990 and 1991, the Secretariat brought together representatives from 14 federal government departments to share their expertise and ideas and help create a guide to plain language for use by public servants and others. The result was *Plain Language: Clear and Simple* and *Pour un style clair et simple*, guides to writing in a way that is easy to follow and understand. The guides have been Canadian best sellers. The Secretariat has also developed a comprehensive teacher's manual for a two-day course in plain language techniques, for use by trainers in government and elsewhere. As well, the NLS is a member of the Interdepartmental Plain Language Partnership Committee, which is involved in the development of plain language guidelines for drafting legislation and regulations.

## **Budget**

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The NLS's total annual budget for its four grants and contributions programs is \$24,300,000. Its non-salary budget is \$1,264,000. The Secretariat's program budget is allocated as follows:

Federal-Provincial/Territorial Program	\$10,650,000
National Program	10,650,000
Literacy Component of the TAGS Grants (1994-99)	2,000,000
Literacy Corps Program	<u>1,000,000</u>
Total Grants and Contributions:	<u>\$24,300,000</u>
Non-Salary Budget	1,264,000
Total Literacy Budget:	<u>\$25,564,000</u>

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## Alberta: Mutual Respect and Volunteer Support

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Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Everyday Activities <sup>1</sup>	Adults aged 16-69 (thousands)	Reading Levels			
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Canada	18,024	7%	9%	22%	62%
Alberta	1,649	5% <sup>2</sup>	7% <sup>2</sup>	17%	71%

Alberta has the second highest literacy rate in Canada, surpassed only by Saskatchewan. The Alberta government works closely with the federal government, educational institutions, private sector organizations, businesses and communities, to ensure that a variety of training programs are available across the province to meet the diverse needs of adults who need to upgrade their education and literacy skills.

The Alberta government is in the process of reforming adult developmental programs to make high quality training more accessible and less expensive. In 1991, the government approved the 'Foundations for Adult Learning and Development Policy'—one of the first comprehensive government policies of its kind in Canada—to guide this process. In 1996, Advanced Education and Career Development released 'Employability and Beyond', a policy paper to guide future work on the creation of a reformed adult development system.

### Structure of the Literacy Program

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The Adult Development Branch of Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development has the major responsibility for adult literacy and basic education programming, including workplace literacy programs and programs to teach English as a second language. In addition to setting policies and leading the reform of adult developmental programs, this branch works closely with Alberta Vocational Colleges, community colleges and school boards to develop and deliver adult literacy and basic education programs. It also funds a

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<sup>1</sup> Persons who reported having no skills are listed in Level 1.

<sup>2</sup> Users are cautioned that the sampling variability is high.

number of adult upgrading programs in schools and communities and fosters workplace literacy initiatives.

While literacy and adult basic education programs were first offered by the four Alberta Vocational Colleges, since the mid-1960s, Alberta's schools have also played a major role in providing this training. Today, 10 public colleges and numerous school boards participate in a variety of government-funded adult education and development programs, some of which are described briefly below.

### **Extension Grant Replacement Program**

This program provides school districts, public post-secondary institutions and private educational centres with three years of decreasing grants to offer adults academic upgrading from grades 1 to 12, on an increasingly cost-effective basis. Approximately 5,000 adult learners attended these programs in 1994-95.

### **Adult Development Program**

The Adult Development Program supports full-time, fixed-term, basic skills programs—including academic upgrading, English as a Second Language and skills training—in post-secondary schools. In 1994-95, the Adult Development Program supported 87 academic upgrading programs serving approximately 2,000 adult learners in 14 institutions. Approximately 44 percent of the program's total 1994-95 budget went towards academic upgrading. The federal government shares the cost of this program.

### **Supports for Independence**

By offering education and training, this program seeks to enable adult clients of Alberta Family and Social Services to become independent or to depend less on social assistance. In 1994-95, approximately 734 adult welfare recipients attended one of the 16 programs offered in nine post-secondary institutions.

### **Community Adult Learning Program—Volunteer Tutor Literacy**

Through the Community Adult Learning Program, the government gives annual grants ranging from \$11,000 to \$75,000 to 63 community programs offering adult literacy training. The amount of the grant depends on the program's size and location. This money enables Community Adult Learning Councils across the province to recruit and train volunteer literacy tutors and to monitor these tutors for six months to ensure a good match between tutors and learners. Tutors and learners meet once or twice a week, for a few hours each time, at their homes or offices, or at the office of the literacy program.



The grants also help communities to meet specific local needs. For example, Edmonton's Prospects Literacy Association, the province's oldest volunteer tutor program, received funding to set up a family literacy program in a local high school and to develop literacy programs for individuals with learning disabilities. In 1994-95, 3,055 learners participated in government-sponsored volunteer literacy programs. In most cases, the services were free.

*The Community Adult Learning Program mobilizes volunteers across the province, gives them training to help them work with learners, and offers them continuing assistance. Program staff monitor the tutor-learner team for at least six months, but often for much longer.*

## **Inmate Education Program**

Funding through this program enables post-secondary institutions to provide academic upgrading, life management courses, and skills training to adult inmates in provincial correctional institutions. In 1994-95, four post-secondary institutions provided academic upgrading services to inmates in eight correctional facilities.

## **Community Consortia Program**

This program gives grants to help four community consortia provide a variety of full-time credit and non-credit programs through post-secondary schools in their regions. Academic upgrading accounted for about one-quarter of these programs in 1994-95. Using four post-secondary institutions, these community associations provided academic upgrading to approximately 235 learners in 10 communities in that year.

## **National Literacy Program**

This federal/provincial venture gives funds to non-profit organizations for innovative adult literacy projects. In 1995-96, this program sponsored projects such as:

- creating easy-to-read learning modules on effective job search skills;
- adapting currently available parenting material for low-literate adults;
- creating a package on the use of study circles for teaching adult literacy; and
- developing standards for adult literacy programs.

## **Literacy Associations and Coalitions**

**Literacy Coordinators of Alberta (LCA)** is a professional development association for the 85 coordinators of the volunteer tutor literacy programs. With funding from the Alberta government, it provides programs and services to respond to needs identified by the coordinators. LCA has been effective in furthering community literacy in the province. Its programs and services include an annual conference and regular training programs for new and experienced literacy coordinators. The association also publishes a quarterly newsletter.

The 500 members and the board of the **Alberta Association for Adult Literacy** come from all sectors, including communities, private sector organizations, educational institutions and the provincial government. This provincial coalition holds an annual conference, publishes a quarterly newsletter, operates a 1-800 information line and offers many other programs.

*The Prospects Literacy Association is Alberta's oldest volunteer tutor literacy program. It serves more than 225 adult learners each year and has a program for developmentally handicapped adults.*

The **Family Literacy Action Group (FLAG)** works in association with similar groups to foster family literacy activities, and has taken on a number of projects supported by the National Literacy Program.

The **Workplace Literacy Advisory Committee** includes representatives from government, business, labour and educational institutions, who meet regularly to promote and advance workplace literacy. Among its activities, the committee sponsored the Western Workplace Literacy Conference. The committee is represented on WWESTNET, the Western Canada Workplace Essential Skills Training Network.

## **Success Factors**

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The people who deliver literacy training and the people who administer provincial government programs in Alberta have a good working relationship. Government representatives and program providers have been able to work together successfully to create many new projects. The mutual respect has led to an increase in cooperative and partnership ventures.

Volunteer efforts are critical to the success of the programs: In 1994-95, 6,710 Albertans—learners, tutors and others—volunteered 223,576 hours of their time to improve the population's literacy skills.

## Budget

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Extension Grant Replacement . . . . .	\$8,689,000
Adult Development Program (academic upgrading only) . . . . .	\$5,823,840 <sup>3</sup>
Supports for Independence . . . . .	\$3,000,000
Community Adult Learning Program—Volunteer Tutor Literacy . . . . .	\$1,130,000
Inmate Education Program . . . . .	\$700,000
Community Consortia Program . . . . .	<u>\$500,000</u>

Total budget for literacy and academic upgrading programs . . . . . \$18,712,840

Through its Students Finance Board Skills Development Program, the Alberta government provided a further \$106.3 million in student support and tuition for a variety of programs, including academic upgrading and literacy training.

## Staff

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In the Adult Development Branch of Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, three staff members work full time and four work part time on adult literacy and basic education programming.

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<sup>3</sup> This represents 44 percent of the \$13,236,000 total program budget.



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## British Columbia: Community Colleges in Creative Partnerships

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Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Everyday Activities <sup>1</sup>	Adults aged 16-69 (thousands)	Reading Levels			
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Canada	18,024	7%	9%	22%	62%
British Columbia	2,084	5%	7%	19%	69%

According to the Statistics Canada 1989 literacy survey, British Columbia's literacy rate is higher than the national average, second only to Saskatchewan and Alberta. Despite this standing, studies indicate that almost one in three British Columbians encounter problems in reading and writing. As a result, literacy and adult basic education were identified as priority concerns in a 1988 government report on *Access*, which proposed an expansion of educational activities and funding in the province. It recommended that colleges be provided with funding to cover the cost of fees, books and supplies for students enrolled in adult basic education (ABE) programs.

The *Access* report led to the creation of the Provincial Literacy Advisory Committee. The committee's mandate was to suggest innovative and practical ways for the Minister of Advanced Education to improve literacy and adult education programs. In 1989, the Committee produced 34 recommendations and called for a comprehensive strategy for increasing literacy in the province. The provincial legislature unanimously supported the recommendations. To date, the government has:

- made the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour (formerly the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology) responsible for the province's literacy strategy;
- introduced a literacy policy that makes the fundamental level of adult basic education (ABE Grades 1 to 8) tuition-free at community colleges; and
- created and staffed the position of Provincial Literacy Coordinator.

### Structure of Literacy Programming

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The legal mandate for adult programming is under the *British Columbia Colleges and Institutes Act*, which is administered by the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour. The

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<sup>1</sup> Persons who reported having no skills are listed in Level 1.

Access and Health Programs Branch of the Ministry is responsible for developmental programs which include literacy, adult basic education, and English-language training.

The Ministry provides base funding to the 16 community colleges and the Open Learning Agency. These organizations are in turn responsible for the majority of academic and literacy upgrading programs for adults in British Columbia. Although the literacy-level program is tuition-free in the colleges, other levels of ABE charge tuition. The tuition amount is kept to a reasonable level and financial assistance is available through the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program.

The Ministry of Education funds programs for adults who want to complete the requirements of a high-school diploma (regular or adult). Since 1989, school districts have offered courses tuition-free to adults who do not have high-school credentials. Much of this work is carried out through continuing education programs in Adult Learning Centres, with a strong component of computer-assisted instruction. School district programs have seen a phenomenal growth in enrolment in ABE over the last few years.

At the end of February 1996, a new, combined Ministry of Education, Skills and Training was announced. It is expected that the new Ministry will address the following issues, which had been identified by the two former ministries:

- perceived inequities in funding levels and fees between colleges and school districts;
- capped versus uncapped enrolment in the two systems;
- a common adult graduation credential;
- a joint articulation process; and
- the development of a quality framework and good-practice guidelines for ABE.

## **Community Colleges**

At present, most of the adult literacy programming in the province is carried out through the community colleges. Nearly all campuses of these institutions have an ABE base-funded program which includes literacy delivery. Volunteer tutors are sometimes used as adjuncts in these literacy programs.

ABE in the college system is divided into four levels:

- Fundamental (Grades 1 to 8);
- Intermediate (Grades 9 to 10);
- Advanced (Grade 11); and
- Provincial (Grade 12).

Since 1984, common agreement on these levels and the course clusters have been worked out among the colleges through an ongoing province-wide articulation process.



### *The ABE articulation process*

The ABE articulation process is overseen by a steering committee and provides an overall structure for consistent community college programs across the province. There are working committees for each of the major discipline areas, which develop generic course outlines and course equivalency guidelines for use by all colleges and the Open Learning Agency.

The Steering Committee and all of the working committees include members from each of the colleges. The committees meet annually to discuss programs and to make changes where necessary. The articulation process enables program providers to share information and ideas, and makes it easier for learners to transfer credits from one institution to another. The Fundamental ABE Working Committee is responsible for literacy.

One of the oldest community college literacy programs in British Columbia is the basic education program at Vancouver Community College. The program grew quickly and became the largest college literacy program in the province. Because of high student enrolment in this program, a number of levels are offered. Instruction is classroom-based, but the program usually offers one or two classes off-campus in community neighbourhood facilities.

*In the 1970s, Vancouver Community College's Basic Education Program started in a portable on the old King Edward Campus site. Students 'owned' the storefront learning centre, and brought in a couch, chairs and a coffee machine. The program grew through word-of-mouth referrals. The motto was 'Come and be happy with us in the hut.'*

### **Partnerships in Action**

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Many community colleges have developed creative partnerships with their communities and other organizations to promote and develop literacy programs. While many of these partnerships began in the late 1970s and early 1980s, others have developed since the advent of the adult literacy cost-shared grant program between the provincial government and the National Literacy Secretariat.

Partnerships have been encouraged at the local level through the cost-shared literacy funding process. Each project has to have a college partner and a community partner. As a unique feature of the cost-shared adjudication process in British Columbia, a field-based advisory committee, which includes two learners, reviews all projects each year. Over a two-day meeting, the committee members make recommendations about which projects should be funded. Some examples of partnerships are described below.

## ***Community Volunteers***

In addition to providing classroom training, several community colleges use volunteer tutors for one-on-one tutoring sessions. For example, the Individualized Community Adult Reading Education (*I-Care*) literacy program at Douglas College uses volunteer tutors to teach adults who are unwilling or unable to enter a classroom situation. A part-time faculty member conducts training sessions for tutors, provides ongoing support, and writes learning plans for students. *I-CARE* is the oldest volunteer outreach literacy program in British Columbia's community colleges. The College of New Caledonia, the College of the Rockies, Malaspina University College, University College of the Fraser Valley, and Okanagan University College are some other community colleges with volunteer tutor programs.

## ***SARAW***

The Speech-Assisted Reading and Writing (SARAW) program was first initiated as a pilot project in 1990 as a joint venture between Capilano College, The Neil Squire Foundation, the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (now Education, Skills and Training) and the National Literacy Secretariat. This talking-computer program allows individuals with severe disabilities to communicate and gain access to community literacy programs. In addition, the program also raises public awareness about the benefits of computer and communications technology in literacy instruction.

The SARAW partnership produced a 10-minute video about integrating severely disabled students into ABE classrooms using the SARAW program. In 1992-93, along with their new partners at Digital Equipment Corporation, the venture team used the video and supplementary educational materials to hold 14 two-hour training workshops throughout the province to teach others how to use the SARAW system. In that year, 79 SARAW computer stations were delivered to B.C. literacy programs and personnel were provided to operate them. Since then, the program has been introduced into other provinces and territories across Canada. In 1995-96, federal funding was being used to develop a companion program called SAM (Speech-Assisted Mathematics).

## ***Literacy Through Artifacts***

Another example of creative literacy partnerships in British Columbia is *Literacy Through Artifacts*, a program implemented by Okanagan University College and the O'Keefe Ranch and Interior Heritage Society. Funding was provided through the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour and the National Literacy Secretariat.

In this program, learners obtained a curious historical artifact and then interviewed a community elder who may have once used it. The interviews were recorded on audiotape, and the students had the challenge of using computers to transcribe the interviews. When all records were complete, they were published in a book called *Footprints: Oral History at the O'Keefe Ranch*, which contains pictures of the artifacts and the documented interviews.

This project benefited both the learners and the Literacy Through Artifacts community. Since some of the participants had never written a letter before, they had a sense of accomplishment and pride in the publication of their work. In addition, they also learned valuable skills in computer use, English and editing. The community, in turn, benefited by having these accounts published and made available.

*'This is more powerful than marks. We were not worried and we accomplished something...The focus was more on learning. You taught yourself, each other, everybody was going through the same thing.'*

—Participant

Literacy Through Artifacts

### ***Learner events***

Some of the most popular literacy projects in British Columbia are the annual learner events. Learner groups from across the province apply to a steering committee, made up of instructors and learners, to stage an event in their community. Such events include workshops on a particular topic, conferences, field trips to visit other programs or sites, or making videos or books. Each year, the results of these events are compiled in a book that is distributed to literacy programs.

In addition to the local events, three provincial literacy conferences for learners in each college region were held in 1990, 1993, and 1995. These conferences provided opportunities for networking, training and the sharing of information and ideas.

### ***Multiple partnerships***

The University College of the Fraser Valley has been particularly successful in developing a wide variety of partnerships in the communities it serves. Families in Motion has been a particularly noteworthy initiative involving 14 local sponsors and seven funders. The program, which provides free preschool activities, adult upgrading, parenting skills, job-readiness training, learning and sharing with children, is offered to parents, grandparents, caregivers, and preschoolers three to four years old.

Another example of multiple partnerships for literacy involved Cultus Lake Elementary School, University College of the Fraser Valley, the Fraser Valley East Literacy Association, the local Canada Employment Centre, the National Literacy Secretariat, and the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour. The Cultus Lake Literacy and Career Awareness Project demonstrated to students aged 9 to 13 the connection between literacy and employment through job-site visits, a career fair, and opportunities for developing job skills. In addition, adults enrolled in a 10-week career preparation course.

Other community partnership projects undertaken by the University College of the Fraser Valley include:

- Literacy Audit for Social Agencies, a joint program of research and plain language work with the B.C. Assessment Authority;



- Women Together, a program that supports women whose husbands or partners are incarcerated in institutions in the Fraser Valley; and
- Partners in Learning, a program for inmates and ex-offenders working in youth-at-risk programs to prevent young people from choosing a life of crime.

A video is currently being made about the Partners in Learning initiative, which has captured media attention.

## **The Open Learning Agency (OLA)**

This degree-granting, post-secondary institution offers flexible education and training opportunities to learners in British Columbia. One of OLA's accomplishments was the creation of *The Knowledge Network*, an educational television channel which offers a wide variety of curriculum-based programs.

Through its Workplace Training Systems program and with funding assistance from Human Resources Development Canada, OLA fosters a number of basic-skills upgrading programs for workers. It does this in partnership with other training institutions, private consultants, businesses, professional associations and workers, in programs such as *SkillPlan*.

### ***SkillPlan***

In 1991, OLA worked closely with the B.C. Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council to develop and deliver *SkillPlan*, a flexible, basic-skills program for construction workers. Since their jobs often require them to work irregular hours and move from site to site, many construction workers find it difficult to attend training programs regularly.

*SkillPlan* solves this problem by allowing workers to attend classes when they can, and to pick up where they last left off. Each participant has a personalized program that combines one-on-one instruction, workshops, peer counselling, and computer-assisted training.

***'What we're really trying to do here is have the learning follow the learner. This way, the worker doesn't have to drop out or give up...It only makes sense. And it's cost-effective.'***

**—Jim Lippert  
Executive Director  
Skillplan**

In November 1993, OLA and the construction industry took training one step further through a new program called *SkillBuild*. This program uses advanced technology, such as communications software and modems, to give workers at remote construction sites access to training.

### ***Foundation Skills Project (FSP)***

This project models the partnership approach that is critical to addressing workforce literacy issues. With an advisory committee that reflects business, government, labour, and



educational interests, the project is funded by the National Literacy Secretariat and managed by a Workforce Training Consortium consisting of the B.C. Chamber of Commerce, *SkillPlan*, Literacy B.C., and the Open Learning Agency.

Presentations were hosted throughout British Columbia and the Yukon by local chambers of commerce. The seminars lasted about 90 minutes and focussed on how to identify the need for workforce basic skills upgrading, how to assess the impact of the bottom-line consequences of low literacy or numeracy levels, and how to overcome barriers to implementing workforce training initiatives. A seven-minute video was part of the presentation. Follow-up plans to the FSP include workplace practitioner training sessions.

## **Other Partnership Programs**

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### ***Skills Now!***

*Skills Now!* is the umbrella name for a series of programs that the provincial government introduced for a two-year period in 1994 to help British Columbia residents develop employment skills. The impetus for this initiative came from the 1992 Premier's Summit on Trade and Economic Opportunity, which pointed to poor worker skills and a scarcity of good training programs as major obstacles to economic development in the province. The provincial economy was changing rapidly, as many small businesses and the service sector were expanding and primary industries were downsizing. As a result, workers needed better reading, writing, math and computer literacy skills to find work, to advance in their careers, and to be productive.

The skills taught in the programs under the *Skills Now!* initiative range from basic literacy and numeracy skills to more advanced technical or management skills. While some of these programs are offered through community colleges or other training institutions, others are set in Community Skill Centres or workplaces. For example, in the Quick Response Training Program, community organizations, business, industry, and community colleges join forces to help the local workforce respond quickly to technological change, start-ups, shut-downs, or new economic opportunities in the area.

### **Literacy B.C.**

This provincial literacy coalition was founded in 1990 and has its roots in Project Literacy B.C., an initiative which started with Public Broadcasting System (PBS) employees and the Adult Basic Education Association of British Columbia (ABEABC) in response to the Project Literacy U.S. plan of 1986. As this initiative took hold, a number of local community-based groups began to emerge, such as Project Literacy Kelowna (1987) and Project Literacy Victoria (1988). With funding from the National Literacy Secretariat, Literacy B.C. came into being as an autonomous, charitable organization.

The organization's mission is to promote literacy, support learners, develop community partnerships, and to present a united voice on literacy. Literacy B.C. recently merged with the former Adult Literacy Contact Centre, and has assumed the activities of this organization. These services include providing a toll-free telephone number for use by learners and the general public, maintaining a provincial database on programs, and issuing a regular newsletter on events and new resources.

Literacy B.C. has organized provincial learners' conferences, as well as summer institutes for practitioner training. It also delivers workshops on relevant topics across the province on request, and is encouraging the growth of a network of regional coordinators. The organization is supported by funds from the National Literacy Secretariat and the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, and from membership fees and donations.

## **Curriculum Development and Learning Materials**

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Curriculum materials are developed through the services of the Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development, which is affiliated with Camosun College. There is usually a specific budget for the literacy curriculum and for adult basic education. Both program areas can also compete for money from a larger provincial funding pot for curriculum development.

Provincially developed materials are made available through the marketing department of the Open Learning Agency. Materials from British Columbia seem to have been well received in other parts of Canada. Cost-shared literacy projects in British Columbia are being catalogued on line through Langara College. Other B.C. curriculum is also being made available in this way.

The *Literacy Materials Bulletin* is a cost-shared project which reviews new literacy materials from many different sources. The materials are tested in literacy programs and a sample page from the material accompanies the review. The Bulletin is published twice a year. The materials are housed at Literacy B.C. and can be borrowed from that office for a limited time.

## **Success Factors**

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British Columbia's college literacy programs are given base funding. This means that the programs have status and support and can meet local needs by being offered in a variety of formats in satellite campuses as well as on the main campus of each college. The provincial policy of offering Fundamental level Adult Basic Education tuition-free helps increase access to literacy opportunities at the colleges.

The articulation process for Fundamental Adult Basic Education across the college system means that colleges agree on the core skills to be developed and the outcomes that should be expected from literacy programs. This makes it easy for students to transfer between colleges or enter other programs. College instructors meet annually to discuss new directions and any issues or developments, and to exchange information on new materials. Indeed, the Open Learning Agency markets curriculum and learning materials developed in the province; these appear to be well accepted in other parts of Canada.

Since 1988 a provincial toll-free number has enabled members of the general public, potential learners and literacy practitioners to gain access to information and resources offered by Literacy B.C. and, in past years, by the Adult Literacy Contact Centre.

British Columbia originated the involvement of an External Review Committee for awarding federal-provincial cost-shared grants. The field-based representatives are active in the literacy field and the Committee includes two learners, one from the board of Literacy B.C. and one from the Learners' Events Steering Committee. Because all participants' contributions are based on their grounded experience, the field respects and accepts their decisions.

## Budget

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In 1994-95, the literacy budget of the former Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour, through the Post-Secondary Education Division, amounted to more than \$8.5 million:

Fundamental ABE programming . . . . .	\$7,800,000
Ministry share of the federal-provincial literacy cost-shared grant . . . . .	700,000
Curriculum development . . . . .	<u>30,000</u>
Total:	<u><u>\$8,530,000</u></u>

In addition, the Ministry provided developmental ABE programs (Grades 9 to 12) in community colleges. The ABE program budget was about \$27 million in 1994-95. The province also offers student support for tuition and books under the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program.

## Staff

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Within the Access and Health Programs Branch of the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, there are three full-time coordinators, with one each for literacy, ABE, and English-language training programs. The Director of the branch, the Manager of Developmental Programs, a research analyst, and a secretary are also involved with literacy issues on a part-time basis.

## Contacts

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The mailing address for the first four contacts listed below is:

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Note: After October 1996, the area code will be (250) for all of British Columbia except the Lower Mainland, Whistler and Hope.

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## Manitoba: Partnerships and Accountability

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Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Everyday Activities <sup>1</sup>	Adults aged 16-69 (thousands)	Reading Levels			
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Canada	18,024	7%	9%	22%	62%
Manitoba	703	5% <sup>2</sup>	7% <sup>2</sup>	23%	65%

Manitoba's literacy rate is higher than the national average, but slightly lower than the literacy rates in the other three western provinces. In 1988-89, a Ministerial Task Force prepared a report entitled *Pathway for the Learner: A Strategy for Literacy for Manitobans*, to guide the development of literacy policy and programs in the province. This report identified a need for more community-based literacy programs that focus on the needs of learners. In response to the Task Force's recommendations, the government created a new organization to chart its new direction for literacy training.

To put its literacy policies into practice the government established the Literacy and Continuing Education Branch (formerly the Manitoba Literacy Office) within the provincial Department of Education and Training. The Branch provides leadership in developing, funding and delivering community programs and works closely with the National Literacy Secretariat, and other organizations in Human Resources Development Canada, which provide advice and financial assistance.

The government also established the Manitoba Literacy Council, which includes representatives from business, education, labour, and community groups, to advise the Minister and the Literacy and Continuing Education Branch.

### Community Program Structure

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Community literacy programs funded by the Literacy and Continuing Education Branch have become the main source of literacy training for adults in Manitoba. All of these programs have paid instructional staff and a cadre of volunteer tutors who assist with the programming.

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<sup>1</sup> Persons who reported having no skills are listed in Level 1.

<sup>2</sup> Users are cautioned that the sampling variability is high.

These programs are designed to meet the needs of all learners, and especially the specific training needs of Francophone, aboriginal, rural and northern residents, members of ethnocultural minority groups and correctional centre inmates and others.

To ensure that community needs are met, each program is designed and managed by a literacy working group or board within the community. An annual Good Practice Guide and Development Plan must be prepared, to reflect the views of all stakeholders and to set program goals. The Literacy and Continuing Education Branch helps to develop the program curriculum, provides learning materials, and monitors effective practices in literacy training. The Branch also provides support through on-site visits, offers certified training for volunteer members of working groups and boards, and periodically evaluates the performance of practitioners.

*Each literacy program is managed by a community working group or board so that the training responds to the real needs of the community.*

The 33 community groups funded by the Literacy and Continuing Education Branch provide training at all levels from grades 1 to 12, but most training is at the lower grade levels. They offer a variety of schedule and program options, depending on the needs of learners in each community. Services can include one-on-one tutorials, part-time programs, group classes, and computer-assisted instruction. Most programs offer part-time day and evening training sessions throughout the year, but in some farming communities, training is concentrated in the off-season, between October and March. One community-based program provides full-time training. Any adult may participate free of charge.

Community colleges, school divisions and voluntary organizations also offer some literacy and upgrading programs.

## **Basic Education in the Workplace**

An important role of the Literacy and Continuing Education Branch is to provide academic upgrading opportunities for workers in their place of employment. The Branch coordinates the activities of the Workplace Education Manitoba Steering Committee, an ad hoc business and labour committee. The Committee develops and promotes innovative models for workplace literacy programs in a variety of economic sectors.

The Branch also coordinates and monitors workplace programs offering workers training in literacy, numeracy and oral skills. Funding from Human Resources Development Canada pays for half of the salaries of program instructors; employers, in return, give their employees 50-percent-paid leave to attend these programs.

## Other Programs and Activities

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The Literacy and Continuing Education Branch gives continuing education grants to rural school divisions, seniors groups, and groups with special needs, such as inmates of correctional centres. The Branch has also developed a series of learner support materials called *Stages of Literacy and Learning* and *Stages of Mathematics*, which give learners structured opportunities to develop everyday skills they need to participate in society. Once a learner has completed the lessons set out in these materials, a Branch staff member reviews his or her work and certifies that the learner has acquired the skills.

*The staff of the Manitoba government's Literacy and Continuing Education Branch are involved in day-to-day literacy program activity. They develop training resources, help organize training sessions for practitioners, and review learners' achievements in the programs Stages of Literacy and Learning and Stages of Mathematics, which the Branch developed.*

In partnership with Literacy Partners of Manitoba, a coalition of literacy practitioners, the Literacy and Continuing Education Branch sponsors Exemplary Practice seminars. These seminars help professional instructors and volunteer tutors to perfect their teaching skills by giving them opportunities to practice their presentations in front of their colleagues and to learn colleagues' successful teaching strategies. There is a high demand for these seminars, and participants' response to them has been very positive.

Each year, the Literacy and Continuing Education Branch prepares demographic statistics on literacy program clients, based on information provided by the community groups.

## Creative Partnerships

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In addition to its partnerships with community groups and with Literacy Partners of Manitoba, the Literacy and Continuing Branch values its cooperative work with the National Literacy Secretariat. Federal and provincial funds for literacy are distributed through a joint committee of Secretariat and Branch staff, and the Branch gains valuable support from the Secretariat in developing workplace literacy initiatives.

## Success Factors

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The success of the Manitoba model of literacy training is based on its strong partnerships. The Literacy and Continuing Education Branch has a very positive relationship with the field. The Branch contributes to the success of the community literacy programs by developing curriculum resources and by training practitioners. These training opportunities, in turn, give practitioners an opportunity to network and share successful ideas and approaches. The

Branch is responsive to practitioners' needs, surveying them annually to determine course preferences, and responding to their suggestions and feedback.

The accountability mechanisms put in place by the Branch are also successful. The annual reviews of literacy practices in the field help the community groups to improve their services by promoting reflection and planning.

## **Budget**

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Community literacy programs . . . . .	\$730,100
Operating costs . . . . .	109,500
Literacy grants, including funds for instructors' salaries, grants for seniors and special needs grants . . . . .	52,500
Continuing education grants . . . . .	<u>44,500</u>
Total 1995-96 provincial budget for literacy, excluding salaries . . . . .	<u>\$936,600</u>

## **Staff**

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The Literacy and Continuing Education Branch has eight full-time employees and one part-time employee, including the Director, an adult learning specialist and regional literacy coordinators.

## **Contacts**

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The mailing address and fax number for all of the following contacts are:

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D-5

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## New Brunswick: Kinship and Leadership

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Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Everyday Activities	Adults aged 16-69 (thousands)	Reading Level			
		Level 1 <sup>1</sup>	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Canada	18,024	7%	9%	22%	62%
New Brunswick	483	6%	12%	26%	56%

New Brunswick is Canada's only officially bilingual province. According to the 1991 Census of Canada, English is the mother tongue of approximately two-thirds of the population, and French is the mother tongue of almost one-third of New Brunswickers.

While New Brunswick's responsibility to promote literacy in both official languages is unique in Canada, the fact that just over half of the province's population lives in rural areas presents a major challenge in providing universal access to literacy training.

In 1991, it was found that, while counties with predominantly English-speaking populations had an average functional illiteracy rate of 15.3 percent, counties with high proportions of francophone residents had an average rate of 26.7 percent. This difference was reflected in local unemployment rates: In 1991, Gloucester County, which has the highest number of Francophones in the province, had an unemployment rate of 17.8 percent, compared to the provincial average of 12.9 percent.

In the late 1980s, the province reassessed its literacy training efforts to identify why its traditional approach was not meeting the needs of some New Brunswickers. That basic question has led to an innovative system that offers residents training that meets local needs and that does so economically.

### **A New Focus for Literacy Training**

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Until 1991, the adult basic education program offered by the nine campuses of New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) was the main adult literacy training program in all regions of the province.

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<sup>1</sup> Persons who reported having no reading skills are listed in Level 1

While NBCC filled an important need, its campuses were too far away to allow many rural residents to take advantage of the training opportunities. And some who took the training may have found the class schedule inconvenient or may have been intimidated by the classroom environment. The dropout rate was as high as 50 percent.

Volunteers tutors offered one-on-one basic literacy training in English to a limited number of New Brunswickers. Few francophones in the province had access to this kind of assistance, however. The French Literacy Councils actively encouraged francophones to enrol in programs, but did not have a mandate to provide literacy training.

By International Literacy Year, 1990, it became obvious that changes were needed in the way that literacy training was being offered to New Brunswickers. The Premier's Advisory Council on Literacy advised that, for New Brunswick to compete with the rest of the world, the provincial government had to tackle head-on some of the problems related to the delivery of literacy training. The government had few resources available to deal with the problems of limited access for rural residents and francophones; clearly, it needed corporate partners to help fund literacy training and community partners to help deliver the training locally. The Council gave the government a framework to guide it in fostering partnerships and drawing public attention to the need for higher literacy levels.

## **Leadership, and a profile for literacy**

In 1991, the Premier appointed Canada's first Minister of State for Literacy. An important part of the Minister's mandate is to raise the profile of literacy and make the people of New Brunswick aware of the importance of lifelong learning. The Minister also provides leadership to provincial literacy programs and promotes their work.

The Department of Advanced Education and Labour was asked to help create an affordable literacy program that could be delivered at the community level. Literacy New Brunswick Inc. was established as a non-profit, charitable organization to coordinate the funding of the province's community initiative. It works at arm's length from the government to:

- orchestrate the province's literacy initiative;
- bring together funding from the provincial and federal levels of government;
- draw partners from the private sector into the funding and delivery of literacy training;
- channel funds to approved community literacy projects throughout the province; and
- market and promote the province's literacy initiative.

In 1992, the government published *Community-based literacy in New Brunswick* to define roles in literacy partnerships for communities, volunteers, business and both levels of government.



## Community-Based Programs Meet Learners' Needs

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New Brunswick now has a mix of community-based programs offering learners flexible training programs that focus on their particular needs and retains some traditional adult basic education programs based in the nine campuses of New Brunswick Community College.

### Community Academic Services Program

The Department of Advanced Education and Labour created the Community Academic Services Program (CASP) in 1991, with the goal of substantially improving literacy skills in the province by the year 2000. CASP seeks to bring learning to learners in their own communities, in a way that puts the needs of learners and communities first. The Department of Advanced Education and Labour sets the core curriculum, but communities can customize these local programs to participants' particular needs. Any adult who is over the age of 16, and not enrolled in the public school system, may take part in a CASP training program for free.

#### *A three-way partnership*

CASP involves a three-way alliance between Literacy New Brunswick Inc., the Department of Advanced Education and Labour (including the New Brunswick Community College), and volunteer community committees.

*When we started the program here, people told us we were going to have a real struggle to get anybody to come. But we made an announcement that we were going to do this, and we had 80 people show up.*

*—Rev. John Stewart  
Blackville, N.B.*

*Literacy New Brunswick Inc.* works at arm's length from the government to coordinate the program's funding. It collects funds from all government and private sector sources, and distributes them to approved community programs and markets and promotes literacy programming.

Each community project has a budget of \$16,752. Of this amount, Literacy New Brunswick Inc. raises \$13,752 from government and private sector sources. The community must provide the remaining \$3,000.

The *Department of Advanced Education and Labour* sets the educational standards for and provides curriculum materials to CASP programs. It also oversees the programs operations and provides administrative support.

A literacy coordinator at each of the nine campuses of the New Brunswick Community College is the first point of contact for communities that want to set up a local training program. The coordinators advise and encourage the volunteer committees and assess the

learners' needs. They help the communities to design programs, obtain materials, and hire and train facilitators. The coordinators then monitor the programs and the Department's standardized tests are administered to participants who want formal testing. Because New Brunswick Community College recognizes credits earned in the CASP programs, it creates a 'learning continuum' that enables students to continue their education in the community college system.

Each *volunteer community committee* identifies local needs for literacy training and sets up, organizes and manages each program with the help of the literacy coordinator at the nearest NBCC campus. The community committee is also responsible for finding an appropriate training site and raising the community's share of the project's budget.

### *High participation rates*

From the beginning, communities, learners and organizations participated in CASP in great numbers. By mid-1995, more than 400 private sector partners had provided money and other resources to help finance local training programs. With their assistance, CASP grew at a rate that far exceeded the government's initial expectations: The government set a target of establishing 100 local training programs in four years; that goal was reached in the first nine months.

By June 1996, more than 120 communities around the province had established a total of 670 local training programs. Of these, 283 provided training in English, 372 provided training in French, and 15 provided training in both official languages. Since each community program can train up to 20 learners—10 in each of two 3-hour sessions per day—these 670 programs represented approximately 13,400 new learning opportunities for New Brunswickers with low literacy skills.

The response to these programs from learners has been very encouraging. The drop-out rate in the community programs is lower—in some cases substantially lower—than that in traditional adult academic upgrading programs. The learning results have also been encouraging. On average, students progress from the basic level to the intermediate level within 33 weeks of a typical 40-week program. Although testing is not mandatory, a steadily growing number of learners try the provincial exams administered by the Department of Advanced Education and Labour. More than 80 percent of the attempts are successful.

### *Participant and program profiles*

About one in three New Brunswickers is francophone, but more than one in two CASP projects offer training in French.

About 60 percent of CASP training is at the basic grade levels, up to Grade 6. While the English volunteer tutors provide one-on-one training to the Grade 3 level, English CASP programs cover Grades 4 to 9. CASP offers basic upgrading in French from Grades 1 to 9.

The intermediate programs in French and English are equivalent to Grades 7 to 9, and 40 percent of CASP training is at these levels.

A survey of community projects showed that more women are taking training: 60 percent of participants are women, 40 percent are men. More than one in four participants receive income assistance and almost half are under 35 years of age.

## **New Brunswick Community College**

NBCC has phased out its adult basic (to Grade 6) academic upgrading program. It offers intermediate (Grades 7 to 9) programs on campus and if there is a need in a remote area, NBCC will set up a classroom in a local adult learning centre if one is available nearby. Correspondence courses at intermediate and higher levels are also available.

NBCC provides employee training programs under contract to companies and other organizations, such as Corrections Canada and the provincial Department of the Solicitor General. Under contract with the provincial Department of Human Resources Development, NBCC also offers intermediate academic upgrading to participants in the NB Works and Youth Futures Programs. This program helps people receiving income assistance to upgrade their skills and improve their chances of finding and keeping a job.

## **Literacy New Brunswick Inc.**

Literacy New Brunswick has developed several programs that build on the success of CASP. The organization provides basic- and intermediate-level academic upgrading under contract with The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (known as TAGS) and the Enhanced Employment Initiatives, which is funded by Human Resources Development Canada. By mid-1995, these programs involved 330 learners in 22 training programs operating in the northeast of the province.

The *Learning in the Workplace Initiative*, which was introduced in 1993, offers business and unions financial incentives to establish literacy programs for their workers. Funding from the Canada/New Brunswick COOPERATION Agreement on Entrepreneurship and Human Resource Development provided grants for 54 programs being established. These programs have provided 1,080 training opportunities for workers.

In 1996-97, *CREW New Brunswick*—the *Competitive, Recognized, Education Workforce* program—is replacing the Learning in the Workplace Initiative. It is being funded by the Regional Development Commission, and will foster a lifelong training environment in industries. It will provide financial incentives to business to set up programs for academic upgrading and computer skills training. It will also establish standards of quality for business and recognize good practice through an awards program.



Through its Technology for Learning Program, Literacy New Brunswick Inc. gives CASP programs computers and other equipment donated by public and private sector sources, to help intermediate-level learners become computer literate.

## **Other Literacy Initiatives Supported by the Government**

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### **Laubach Literacy New Brunswick**

This private non-profit provincial organization consists of literacy councils offering one-on-one volunteer tutoring in English. The organization, which recruits and trains tutors, is affiliated with the national and international Laubach organizations. Laubach Literacy publishes literacy training materials up to the Grade 4 level, that are based on the Laubach method of teaching. It also produces promotional materials and serves as a resource for English Literacy Councils providing one-on-one tutoring. Laubach Literacy New Brunswick and the English Literacy Councils receive an annual grant from the provincial government.

### **Other Supporting Organizations**

The New Brunswick Committee on Literacy is a broadly based umbrella organization that includes representatives from the federal and provincial governments and from business, labour and voluntary organizations, as well as learners and educators. Its goals are to promote a common understanding of the problem of illiteracy and to foster a commitment to action in all sectors.

### **La Fédération d'alphabétisation du Nouveau-Brunswick Inc. [New Brunswick literacy federation inc.]**

As the umbrella organization for the French Literacy Councils in the province, the Fédération focuses primarily on promotional activities to encourage francophone New Brunswickers to enrol in adult basic education programs. Each of the individual councils receives an annual grant from the provincial government.

## **Private Sector Efforts to Promote Literacy**

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New Brunswick's partnership approach has inspired a number of private-sector initiatives that support the province's literacy objectives. *Canada Post*, for example, developed 'The Reading Game,' a program to introduce the joy of reading to elementary school children. It is now offering the program to other provinces as well. Numeracy will also be promoted in New Brunswick schools, thanks to the *Canadian Bankers Association* (CBA), which adopted



innumeracy as a corporate cause. The CBA chose New Brunswick for the pilot project of a contest called 'Counting on You.' The winning entry was developed into a mystery math game that is being used as a teaching resource in Grades 6, 7 and 8.

*Superior Propane* launches the barbecue season each spring with a week-long *Fill for Literacy* campaign. The company's local distributors donate all proceeds from propane tank fill-ups to literacy organizations in their communities.

The *New Brunswick Optometrists Association*, with partners *Ocean Optical* and *Viva Canada*, created 'Vision New Brunswick,' which provides literacy learners with free eye examinations and glasses. The program is becoming part of a Canada-wide campaign.

The *New Brunswick Command of the Royal Canadian Legion* is piloting a *School Reading Program* in partnership with the Minister of education and the Minister of State for Literacy and Adult Education. The Minister of State for Youth launched a province-wide school reading program in New Brunswick this spring. Trained Legion and Ladies Auxiliary volunteers are reading to young children of all abilities in Grades K-3 in English and French schools.

*Shoppers Drug Mart*, recognizing the link between literacy and health, has developed a program to bring information about prescription and over-the-counter drugs to New Brunswick learners. Shoppers Drug Mart pharmacists visit adult literacy classrooms and invite participants to clean out their medicine chests and bring old medications with them to the next class. At that time, a pharmacist evaluates the effectiveness of the medications and answers questions about drugs and health care in general. The learners are then invited to visit the pharmacy to observe the pharmacist at work.

## Success Factors

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One of the main reasons for CASP's success is that participants receive training in familiar surroundings, usually a church hall or a community centre. Members of the CASP program are likely to discover that they have much in common and community events may provide topics for discussion. This gives learners a greater sense of belonging and helps lessen any fear of being stigmatized. By building test-taking strategies and techniques into the learning process, CASP programs can also lower participants' fear of taking tests.

CASP's low drop-out rate of between 7 and 12 percent can be attributed partly to the spirit of kinship that develops between learners, and to the fact that programs can adapt readily to participants' needs and responsibilities. For example, fishing and farming communities with seasonal work patterns can adjust their training schedules accordingly, rather than following the typical schedule of 15 hours a week over a 40-week period.

It is particularly noteworthy that CASP programs reach many more people than did traditional, institution-based training programs, at a cost of approximately \$1.39 per student-hour, about one-fifth of the cost of traditional training.

The overall success of CASP has led other countries to take notice. Representatives from South Africa, Morocco, Burkina Faso and Rumania, have come to New Brunswick to discuss the feasibility of starting a similar program in their country.

In the spring of 1996, Literacy New Brunswick Inc. was invited to join the Canadian International Development Agency on their mission to Burkina Faso. The goal of the mission was to explore the feasibility of adapting the CASP model for that country and work was begun on a proposal to be made to the government of Burkina Faso.

The CASP initiative received four awards in 1995:

- From the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC), the bronze award for Innovative Management, sponsored by Coopers and Lybrand.
- From the Conference Board of Canada, a national award for Excellence in Business-Education Partnerships, sponsored by the Stentor Alliance.
- From UNESCO, the 1995 International Literacy Prize, sponsored by the International Reading Association.
- The Governor General's Flight for Freedom award, sponsored by Canada Post.

## Budget

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NBCC academic upgrading programs .....	\$3,593,500
Community Academic Services Program .....	1,323,300
Grants to voluntary literacy organizations .....	<u>63,813</u>

Total provincial budget for academic upgrading in 1995-96:	<u>\$5,480,613</u>
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## Staff

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A total of 65 employees work full-time on developing, delivering or evaluating literacy training in the New Brunswick government. Another 30 work part-time or combine literacy program work with other responsibilities.

## Contacts

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All of the contacts listed below can be reached at:

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## Newfoundland and Labrador: Partnerships for Community Learning Programs

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Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Everyday Activities <sup>1</sup>	Adults aged 16-69 (thousands)	Reading Levels			
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Canada	18,024	7%	9%	22%	62%
Newfoundland	384	7%	17%	36%	39%

According to the 1989 Statistics Canada literacy survey cited above, the adult literacy rates for Newfoundland and Labrador are far below the average rates in Canada. The provincial government, through the Department of Education and Training, has identified literacy as a priority concern. In June 1994, the province created the Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Council, with a board of directors made up of representatives from literacy groups throughout the province, became responsible for coordinating literacy programming and services in the province.

The Council addresses the problems of basic functional literacy education in Newfoundland and Labrador by assessing and responding to the literacy needs of the people of the province. Community committees, local organizations, private citizens and other groups define each community's literacy needs.

The Council is responsible for establishing a strategic plan to provide literacy programs and services to Newfoundlanders, and for establishing various literacy services, including developing standards, policies and procedures. The Council is also responsible for entering into agreements with government departments and agencies, businesses, educational institutions or community groups that support literacy programming.

*'The Literacy Development Council is dedicated to the promotion and encouragement of a more literate society for Newfoundland and Labrador. The Council will address the needs of the Province through the development and implementation of a provincial strategic plan focused on the provision, coordination and promotion of quality literacy programs and services.'*

The number of people enrolling in Newfoundland's literacy programs has increased significantly in recent years. The Council attributes this increase to promotional campaigns that the federal and provincial governments sponsor, the work of other provincial

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<sup>1</sup>Persons who reported having no skills are listed in Level 1.

departments and agencies, and the programs the federal government has established to retrain unemployed workers from the fishing industry.

## LABRADOR

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### Community-Based Initiatives in Labrador

Like much of Canada's north, Labrador's five regions are characterized by a wide geographic area, small population, a variety of cultures, and travel and communications systems that are challenging, costly and time consuming. Within this context, the resourcefulness and determination of local people is critical if literacy activities are to succeed. Over the last four years, the Labrador Institute of Northern Studies (LINS) and Frontier College have collaborated with community development, Aboriginal and educational organizations on a project called the Chawker's Labrador Community Initiative. Outcomes include increased awareness, resources, skills, confidence and infrastructure. Specifically, recent developments include:

- Community-operated learning centres
- literacy outreach workers projects
- one to one tutoring and tutor training through the establishment of volunteer literacy councils
- partnerships between local literacy groups and national literacy organizations (Laubach and Frontier College) to find new ways of delivering training for tutor trainers
- volunteer reading circles in coastal communities
- clear language workshops
- oral history projects
- peer tutoring initiatives

As a result of these recent developments, Labrador literacy groups are building and encouraging others to participate in broader community education initiatives and networks. The emerging **Labrador Literacy Information and Action Network** aims to link these groups through teleconferences, computer networks, video and resource banks.

Often, the management skills and experience required to maintain and build on existing initiatives are not available in the communities where they are most needed. As a result, LINS and Frontier College are developing a distance and apprenticeship management training initiative for community-based literacy practitioners and groups.

## **Structure of the Literacy Program**

Throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, community-based organizations such as community colleges, volunteer literacy councils, private training institutions, and community groups and agencies offer basic literacy programs to adults.

These community organizations offer training at a variety of levels, from teaching basic literacy skills to preparing learners for high-school equivalency and college programs. They offer academic upgrading in various formats, including classroom settings, one-on-one tutoring sessions, workplace and union-hall settings, and computer-assisted learning programs. In addition to teaching literacy and numeracy skills, many programs provide instruction in computer technology, life skills and job-search preparation.

### ***Community colleges***

The community colleges offer a number of literacy programs, using money they receive from their grant-in-aid, specific provincial grants and other funding opportunities arranged through contract training initiatives. The services include providing literacy resource centres, delivering classroom programming at all three levels of adult basic education, investing in curriculum development, and providing professional support to community-based programs.

### ***Volunteer organizations***

There are 25 active Laubach literacy councils providing strong volunteer support throughout Newfoundland communities.

Laubach Literacy Canada is a private organization that publishes literacy training materials up to the Grade 4 level that are

based on the Laubach method of teaching. It also produces promotional materials and serves as a resource for councils that are providing one-on-one tutoring.

*The Laubach councils also sponsor provincially based programs such as Books For Babies, summer reading camps, and tutor training workshops.*

*Teachers On Wheels*, another volunteer agency, has a program which is very active on the Avalon peninsula. This organization provides literacy services to both learners and tutors.

### ***Private training institutions***

In recent years, private training institutions have also become involved in basic literacy training. These private institutions receive most of their funding from contract training initiatives and in-kind contributions.

### *Other community groups and agencies*

There are a number of community-based programs sponsored by local development associations, special interest groups, and other government departments. These programs offer a diversity of programs on an ad hoc basis.

## **Creative Partnerships**

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Because of the province's small population and limited resources, literacy stakeholders take advantage of every opportunity available to forge partnerships with other groups and agencies. The Literacy Development Council is a recent example of such partnerships, with its main purpose of helping to coordinate literacy activities and avoid duplication of services.

The Gander Literacy Centre is another example of a creative partnership that would not be operating today without the support and cooperation of various literacy groups in the province. The Centre is housed in the Gander Public Library, and is supported by the provincial and regional library boards, the Central Newfoundland Regional College, the Town of Gander, the Literacy Development Council, the Department of Education and Training, and the National Literacy Secretariat.

## **Success Factors**

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Community learning centres have become the most popular way to deliver basic literacy services to adult Newfoundlanders, since learners want to be active partners in the learning process. This learner interest is key to the program's success.

Program flexibility is also important to Newfoundlanders. Many participants are seasonal workers who need flexible class schedules. In addition, the success of many literacy activities depends on distance-education technology, since the population is small and scattered. The strong volunteer support for the province's literacy activities is also a factor in the program's success.

## **Budget**

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Each year, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador provides the Literacy Development Council with base funding of \$570,000 to fulfil its mandate. The provincial government also indirectly funds literacy training through its grant-in-aid allocations to the province's five regional colleges. The actual amounts that the colleges spend on literacy services vary each year, depending on the priorities that regional boards of governors define



for each college. There is also an agreement with the federal government to match \$500,000 of the province's Literacy Development Council's funding to support specific projects through grant applications awarded by the National Literacy Secretariat.

## Staff

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There are 3 staff members who work part-time and 2 staff members who work full-time on coordinating adult literacy programming in Newfoundland's Literacy Development Council.

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## **The Northwest Territories: Literacy in Eleven Official Languages**

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The Northwest Territories has the lowest literacy rate in Canada. The 1994 NWT Labour Force Survey indicates that more than one in three residents over the age of 14 have a grade 9 education or less. Using this as an indicator of adults' literacy skills, the literacy skills of 60 percent of aboriginal residents may not be adequate for everyday reading and writing tasks.

Until recently, it has not been easy to get a high-school education in many parts of the Northwest Territories. Many communities did not have high schools, so many students had to travel long distances or leave home to get a high school education. This barrier was bridged in the 1990s, as extension programs were introduced to enable young people to remain in their home communities while they completed their schooling. The number of aboriginal people completing more years of high school has risen steadily since this innovation was introduced.

Sixty-one percent of the people in the Northwest Territories are aboriginal and there are eleven official languages: English, French, Inuktitut, Dogrib, Chipewyan, Gwich'in, North Slavey, South Slavey, Innuinaktun, Inuvialugtun and Cree. Fifty-eight percent of aboriginal people speak an aboriginal language and English, but the use of aboriginal languages is declining except among the Inuit. And while three out of four Inuit can read and write in Inuktitut, fewer than one in three have literacy skills in English above the grade 9 level. Approximately one-half of the Dene and Inuvialuit populations and almost one-third of the Métis population have English literacy skills below the grade 9 level.

The economy is changing in the north, as it is elsewhere in Canada. Most jobs now are in service industries, and people need more education and training than they did in the past to find employment and to become financially independent. English literacy skills are particularly important for getting an education and for finding a job, but skill in at least one official aboriginal language is also essential for many jobs in education, health care, human services and public services. The importance of literacy in the aboriginal languages reflects the desire in the Northwest Territories to enhance and preserve the cultures and traditions of the aboriginal people.

### **Structure of the Literacy Program**

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The Department of Education, Culture and Employment funds most adult literacy and basic education programs in the public colleges, helps build public awareness of the importance of literacy, and manages contributions to community-based literacy projects. The Department's Colleges and Continuing Education Division supports community literacy programs by

developing training materials and curricula, monitoring and evaluating programs, and gathering territorial data on literacy.

The 1987 Continuing Education Policy guides the department in developing and delivering adult literacy and basic education programs. This policy focusses on fostering lifelong learning, integrating aboriginal languages wherever possible, and developing responsive programs that incorporate national standards and that lead to social and economic independence. The department will revise this policy in 1995-96, and will include directives pertaining specifically to adult literacy and basic education.

In 1990, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment introduced a *Strategy for Literacy in the NWT*. This comprehensive strategy seeks to strengthen the adult literacy and basic education programs, make them accessible to more residents, and increase public involvement in literacy training at the community level.

*Dene elders have said that the child is born grasping the drum. The child is holding in the palm of its hands the accumulated knowledge, skills and perspectives of the Dene. This drum ensures the continuation of the Dene as a people. The child becomes the community and the community is the future of the people. The child is therefore the future.*

—Dene Kede curriculum  
From People: Our Focus for the Future, NWT Education, Culture and Employment

The literacy strategy is guided by the following principles:

- The schools and the continuing education system should provide opportunities for residents of all ages to gain a functional level of literacy in all of the official languages of the Northwest Territories.
- Programs should focus on the learner and should be provided through community schools or learning centres, or through non-government organizations based in the community.
- The methodology and materials used should recognize and reflect the interests, goals and culture of the learner and the community.
- The government, communities and individuals must share responsibility for literacy training.

The Department is reviewing this strategy as part of a review of the current adult basic education program.

## Public College Programs

The public colleges have the primary responsibility for delivering adult literacy and basic education programs on campus or in Community Learning Centres located in most communities across the Northwest Territories.



Basic literacy programs teach adults how to read, write, speak and understand English, French or aboriginal languages, and provide training in mathematics. Academic development programs prepare adults for post-secondary education or employment. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment sets the standards and objectives of these programs, determines the scope and sequence of skills being taught, and recommends teaching approaches to ensure consistency throughout the territories.

In 1988-89, the government began giving the colleges additional financial support to expand the delivery of community-based literacy programming. As well, in a cost-sharing agreement with the National Literacy Secretariat, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment gives grants to colleges and community adult educators for local literacy projects. Priority is given to projects for communities that do not have resident adult educators or regular adult basic education programs.

### **Community Literacy Projects Fund**

Community Education Councils, Bands, Friendship Centres and local women's groups also deliver literacy training programs with funding from the Community Literacy Projects Fund.

*A local Band designed and developed curriculum materials based on the traditional and spiritual values of the drum in Dene life. Aboriginal teachers-in-training are coordinating the project.*

The Fund, which was established in 1990, has flexible funding criteria that allow for a wide variety of programs to meet specific community needs. For example, recognizing that a child's early years are critical to the later development of literacy skills, the Fund helped a local woman's group to provide training to parents with low literacy skills. The project was run in cooperation with the Community Learning Centre and Hamlet. In another project, a local library board also developed an 'early intervention program' to involve parents and children in reading activities.

### **Aboriginal Literacy Programs**

Since 1991, the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement on Official Languages has provided funding to community-based, non-government organizations for literacy training in aboriginal languages.

### **Workplace Literacy**

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is developing a Workplace Literacy Initiative to encourage businesses and industries to provide basic skills training in the workplace.

## NWT Literacy Council

The NWT Literacy Council was formed in 1990 to provide support and information to literacy professionals. It also takes part in activities to promote literacy in the Northwest Territories.

*A local Band initiated a workplace literacy program to meet local needs for trained carpenters. The Band has since created its own construction company and is committed to basic skills training for its employees.*

## Success Factors

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The NWT's approach of helping the community to develop literacy programming that meets the specific needs of the local population has been quite successful. This approach generates a sense of ownership in and responsibility for literacy issues in the local community. The literacy projects can often be linked to other developmental initiatives operating in the community.

## Staff

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One staff person in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment works full time on literacy and adult basic education programs. The department hires additional staff on a contract or casual basis when necessary.

## Budget

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Adult basic education programs in community colleges [includes salaries, operation and maintenance] .....	\$5,000,000
Grants and contributions through the Community Literacy Projects Fund .....	381,000
Literacy projects in community colleges .....	315,000
Administration .....	<u>83,000</u>
Total budget for adult literacy and basic education programs .....	<u>\$5,779,000</u>

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## Nova Scotia: Partnerships to Respond to Diverse Client Needs

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Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Everyday Activities <sup>1</sup>	Adults aged 16-69 (thousands)	Reading Levels			
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Canada	18,024	7%	9%	22%	62%
Nova Scotia	594	5% <sup>2</sup>	10%	28%	57%

With statistics like the ones above showing Nova Scotia's adult literacy rates lower than those of Canada as a whole, the province was presented with the challenge of providing innovative learning opportunities to its citizens. In response to this challenge, the provincial government has established a wide-ranging network of community partnerships as the most effective way to promote and support a standardized program of adult literacy and upgrading for most adult Nova Scotians.

In 1988, the Nova Scotia government established the Literacy Section within the Department of Advanced Education and Job Training. The Section became responsible for developing the province's literacy policy, and for ensuring that adult Nova Scotians have access to lifelong literacy upgrading opportunities. In the following year, the province released a research report called *Adult Literacy, Basic Education and Academic Upgrading in Nova Scotia: The Role of the Community College*. The report's recommendations have served as a blueprint for literacy activity in Nova Scotia. These recommendations include developing a practitioner training program, creating regional literacy committees, establishing literacy resource centres, and providing services to ethnocultural minority groups such as the African-Canadian and Mi'kmaq communities. Provincial ministers endorsed the 1989 report, assigning community colleges as the focal point for literacy activity. The government organized a task force to ensure that consistent literacy upgrading programs were implemented at each community college campus in Nova Scotia. After a departmental restructuring in 1995, the Literacy Section became the Adult Education Section within the Department of Education and Culture's Adult Learning and Innovation Division.

The provincial government is designing a strategy for developing an adult upgrading continuum called *Learn Nova Scotia*, which will include a policy on adult education.

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<sup>1</sup> Persons who reported having no skills are listed in Level 1.

<sup>2</sup> Users are cautioned that the sampling variability is high.

## Structure of the Literacy Program

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The Adult Education Section works with community organizations, institutions, labour, business, industry, and other levels of government. Throughout Nova Scotia, community college campuses, school boards, private trade schools, literacy councils and community groups and agencies offer academic upgrading for adults from beginning levels to post-secondary training.

The Adult Education Section is responsible for coordinating and financially supporting agencies to develop and deliver adult literacy and academic upgrading programs in Nova Scotia. The province's major literacy activities are:

- Community Learning Initiative
- Workplace Education Initiative
- Learning Support Centres
- Services for People with Disabilities
- Tutor and Instructor Training
- Publications

These activities are described below.

### Community Learning Initiative

In January 1994, community groups, local authorities and the province joined efforts to establish the Community Learning Initiative. The Initiative provides grants, ranging from \$6,000 to \$20,000, to community organizations or networks that offer literacy instruction from the basic-skills level to the Grade 12 level. This funding covers salary and overhead costs for hiring coordinators and instructors to deliver the literacy programs.

*The learning networks supported by the Community Learning Initiative are in an ideal position to identify ongoing learning needs in their communities, and actively to seek other sources of funding and support to meet those needs.*

To date, 27 community-based learning networks have participated in the Community Learning Initiative. These networks reflect the communities they serve throughout the province, with representatives from ethnocultural minority groups, school boards, literacy councils, community college campuses, libraries, employers, unions, government departments and community groups providing social and human services.

Using innovative program models, the networks offer academic upgrading in a variety of settings, including classrooms, one-on-one tutoring sessions, and computer-assisted learning programs. In addition to teaching literacy and numeracy skills, many programs provide

instruction in computer technology, life skills, and job-search techniques. Programs are varied to meet the unique needs of specific groups such as single mothers, ex-offenders and people in correctional facilities, people who have mental and physical disabilities, and people living in co-operative housing.

The Nova Scotia government has approved more than 130 programs for funding under the Community Learning Initiative, giving more than 1,000 Nova Scotians an opportunity to increase their literacy skills.

### *The Nova Scotia Academic Upgrading Program for Adults*

The curriculum that the Community Learning Initiative's networks are encouraged to use is called the *Nova Scotia Academic Upgrading Program for Adults*. It is comprised of four levels, ranging from basic literacy to Grade 12 equivalency.

*The Nova Scotia Academic Upgrading Program for Adults uses themes that connect the classroom with students' everyday lives. Theme topics arise from students' interests, concerns and career considerations, as well as from course requirements.*

The provincial government developed the program in partnership with Nova Scotia Community College to provide a standardized program of academic upgrading for all college campuses, and to offer a full range of programming that allow adult students to have access to the occupational training programs of their choice.

The curriculum is learner-centred, accommodating learners' particular needs and learning styles, and respecting the life experiences that each learner brings to the program. Tutors use a variety of teaching techniques, classroom activities and resource materials that are appropriate and relevant to the adult learners. The curriculum focuses on problem-solving and study strategies that promote learners' success during the program and that help in future training and employment endeavours. The design of the curriculum and the course materials are sensitive to racial and cultural issues.

### **Workplace Education Initiative**

Because of its collaboration with employers and employees, Nova Scotia is recognized as a Canadian leader in developing workplace literacy programming. Since 1989, the Adult Education Section has been working in partnership with business, industry, and labour to coordinate the

Workplace Education Initiative, a joint federal/provincial program designed to promote a literacy-based training culture in Nova Scotia workplaces. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the National Literacy Secretariat provide the funding.

*The objective of the Workplace Education Initiative is to design innovative programs to meet the specific needs of Nova Scotia employees, employers, and unions, within the context of the Maritime economy.*



This initiative is available to working Nova Scotians who want to upgrade their job-related reading, writing, math, problem-solving, critical-thinking, and communications skills. Both small and large businesses offer workplace upgrading programs, including hospitals, manufacturing establishments, businesses, nursing homes, food processing plants, school boards and hotels.

Staff from the Adult Education Section work closely with businesses to conduct upgrading needs assessments for the business. They then train instructors, advise on curriculum modifications, recommend teaching resources and strategies, and follow up by evaluating the effectiveness of the program. Making upgrading programs available in the workplace has given more adult Nova Scotians the opportunity to learn. As a result, businesses have employees with stronger academic and job-related skills and who are more confident, adaptable, and able to take on the demands of an ever-changing workplace.

Funding for each work site averages \$3,000 for training and upgrading; other costs are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. In 1994-95, the initiative provided funding to 45 workplace programs; by March 1996, the province hopes to have 65 workplace programs in place.

## **Learning Support Centres**

In 1990, the Nova Scotia government opened eight English-language and one French-language Learning Support Centres, with materials available for loan to instructors, tutors, program administrators and students.

The English centres each contain more than 6,000 books, serials, audiocassettes, and videocassettes dealing with adult literacy, basic education, and academic upgrading. The French centre, located in Dartmouth, serves the Acadian community by providing about 3,000 items to help Acadian adults upgrade their reading and writing skills.

The centres also have specialized resources in specific subject areas, including plain language, family literacy, prior-learning assessment, workplace upgrading, and the needs of ethnocultural minority groups such as African-Canadians and Mi'kmaq and other First Nations peoples. For people with disabilities, the Learning Support Centres have a variety of print, video and braille materials on disability and education.

### ***Plain-language workshops***

The Learning Support Centres have a variety of materials written and designed using plain-language principles. In fact, the Adult Education Section has developed a number of resources to help individuals learn more about plain language and to enable facilitators to teach plain-language principles.

The two-hour workshop in plain language introduces participants to the basic concepts of plain language. The seven-hour workshop goes further by discussing editing and design



techniques. Each workshop has a facilitator's guide and a handbook for participants which expand on the topics presented in the workshops.

*The plain-language workshop materials available at the Learning Support Centres are useful for any facilitator who feels comfortable delivering a basic workshop on plain language techniques, or any person interested in improving their written communication skills.*

## **Services for People with Disabilities**

The Adult Education Section offers resources and services that make it easier for people with disabilities to gain access to adult literacy and upgrading programs. The Section has set up an adaptive aids loan bank where people with disabilities can borrow equipment such as computers with voice synthesizers, software programs, adapted computer keyboards, external speech synthesizers, systems to enlarge print, braille typewriters, infrared amplification systems, teletypewriters, and closed-caption decoders.

In addition, the Nova Scotia government has developed a number of innovative programs that provide literacy and upgrading opportunities to people with disabilities. One program promotes braille and literacy skills, while another upgrading program for deaf adults is taught in English and American Sign Language. The province of Nova Scotia also supports a program, for people who have suffered head injuries, that teaches them to use memory books to keep track of events in their lives. Another program teaches literacy and computer skills to people who need alternatives to books, paper, and pens.

### ***Accessing Learning for Adults with Disabilities***

The Adult Education Section produces a publication called *Accessing Learning for Adults with Disabilities* for instructors and tutors who work with students with disabilities. This training resource discusses the needs of adults with motor or sensory impairments, explains specific disabilities, and provides teaching ideas, strategies, and adaptations. The manual is available in print and braille versions.

## **Tutor and Instructor Training**

As one of its primary functions, the Adult Education Section provides professional development to community agencies, volunteer organizations, and institutions involved in adult literacy.

### ***The Tutor and Instructor Training and Certification Program***

In each region the Adult Education Section offers a 30-hour Tutor and Instructor Training and Certification Program to help improve the skills of tutors, instructors, and teachers working in adult literacy and upgrading programs. A variety of organizations use the program, including university volunteer groups, volunteer councils, paid tutors working in programs for social assistance recipients, and teachers of night-school programs.

The program introduces a variety of adult education practices, learning activities and resource materials that instructors can use to help adults improve their reading, writing, and math skills. While participants do not need to have previous literacy or upgrading training, teaching experience is beneficial. Participants receive a certificate from the Department of Education and Culture once they have completed the program.

*During the training program, case studies and projects reinforce the concepts that are presented during the sessions. Participants receive an instructor's handbook, which expands on the topics presented in the workshops.*

## **Publications**

To promote adult literacy and upgrading, the Adult Education Section develops educational curricula and resources, such as:

- *Nova Scotia Academic Upgrading Program for Adults*, the curriculum used for the Community Learning Initiative;
- *Resources for Everyday Thinking*, an adult education program that provides information, ideas, and strategies to help adults learn critical-thinking skills by studying television and its influence on thinking and learning; and
- *Mi'kmaq Past and Present: A Resource Guide*, which presents a brief historical overview of the Mi'kmaq community, introduces its cultural traditions, discusses political and social issues important to the Mi'kmaq, and provides a bibliography of further readings and supplementary materials.

## **Creative Partnerships**

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Without creative partnerships with private-sector agencies, the Adult Education Section considers that its mandate of promoting and supporting adult literacy and upgrading programming in Nova Scotia would be close to impossible. The Section works in partnership with the following literacy service providers:

- Nova Scotia Community College and Collège de l'Acadie;
- district school boards;
- federal government departments;
- private trainers and trade schools; and
- the Nova Scotia Provincial Literacy Coalition.

## **Nova Scotia Community College and Collège de l'Acadie**

The Adult Education Section and Nova Scotia Community College worked together to develop the college's academic upgrading program to provide access to community college programs for adult learners who have not completed high school. Many of the 19 campuses of Nova Scotia Community College offer these adult basic education classes, using the *Nova Scotia Academic Upgrading Curriculum for Adults*. Graduates of these classes receive an upgrading certificate.

The Collège de l'Acadie [Acadia College] provides French-language community college programs to adults in seven learning centres, six in Nova Scotia and one in Prince Edward Island. In 1994-95, 71 students were enrolled in the Collège's upgrading programs.

## **District School Boards**

School boards in Nova Scotia provide adult and continuing education programs and the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) program in which adults receive high-school equivalency diplomas. In 1994-95, more than 2,400 adults received their GED diplomas. In Halifax-Dartmouth, school boards support volunteer literacy programs in libraries. Nineteen boards have also created adult day schools, providing public school programming to adults and out-of-school youths. Students who graduate receive a high-school leaving certificate.

The province's school boards are exploring ways to forge partnerships with other organizations to deliver adult and community education programs. The goal is to create a community education officer position within each board, who will be responsible for initiating and promoting adult and community education initiatives. The school boards are restructuring, however, to reduce their numbers from 22 to 7, and have faced considerable cuts in their adult education grants.

## **Federal Government Departments**

Through the National Literacy Funding Program, the federal and provincial governments have joined efforts to provide money to community groups and educational institutions for innovative adult literacy projects such as research, curriculum development, and awareness and outreach.

## **Private Trainers and Trade Schools**

About 95 private trainers and private trade schools in the province are registered under the *Private Trade Schools' Act*. Of those registered, 15 deliver literacy and academic upgrading programs, with delivery models that vary according to program need and preference. A number of the private schools use computerized instruction in their upgrading activities.

## The Nova Scotia Provincial Literacy Coalition

In 1992, individuals and groups concerned with literacy and adult upgrading in the province formed the Nova Scotia Provincial Literacy Coalition. This coalition includes learners, literacy groups, adult educators, organizations, members of business and labour, volunteers and community groups.

The coalition offers literacy grants to non-profit organizations involved in literacy and adult upgrading. The maximum grant available per project or activity is \$3,000 over 12 months. The Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournament for Literacy provides half of the funding for the grants program, with the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture matching the amount raised.

## Success Factors

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In Nova Scotia, the provincial government believes that its partnerships with the community and various levels of government are the reasons for the success of its adult literacy programming.

In communities around the province, provincial staff and community volunteers are committed to the principles of adult education and to the importance of literacy and numeracy. The relationships and partnerships formed in the field between the adult education coordinators and the literacy and upgrading practitioners are vital to the success of all the literacy activities.

Within the government framework, the partnership between the Adult Education Section and the National Literacy Secretariat has led to many quality projects and initiatives. Provincial coordinators foster partnerships with the various federal departments and local agencies to provide consistent and quality programs and services for literacy and academic upgrading.

## Budget

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The 1995-96 budget for the Adult Education Section, excluding salaries, is:

Community Learning Initiative . . . . .	\$900,000
Workplace Education Initiative . . . . .	383,000
Operating costs . . . . .	92,900
Correspondence study . . . . .	<u>220,400</u>

Total:	<u>\$1,596,300</u>
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## Staff

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The Adult Education Section is staffed by 3 managers and 9 adult education coordinators, 6 serving geographic regions of the province, and 3 with provincial mandates to serve specific communities, namely Mi'kmaq, Francophones, and persons with disabilities. An Adult Education Coordinator with the African-Canadian Services Division works with the Adult Education Section on the needs of the African-Canadian community.

The Section also contracts with workplace field officers for part of the year to coordinate the Workplace Education Initiative. In addition to permanent staff, the Section hires other staff members on contract to carry out research and curriculum development activities.

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## Ontario: A Diversity of Programs to Meet Changing Needs

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Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Everyday Activities <sup>1</sup>	Adults aged 16-69 (thousands)	Reading Levels			
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Canada	18,024	7%	9%	22%	62%
Ontario	6,689	9%	8%	21%	62%

Although its literacy rate mirrors that of the country as a whole, the fact that about one in two immigrants to Canada settle in Ontario means that the province faces unique literacy challenges. The 1989 Statistics Canada literacy survey found that only about one in three immigrants whose first language was other than English or French had the literacy skills they needed for everyday life. The 1991 Census reported that nearly 200,000 Ontarians, including many aboriginal people in northern Ontario, do not speak English or French. Ontarians who want and need to learn English or French often enrol in literacy programs.

There is no legislation that specifically addresses adult literacy education in Ontario. In fact, until 1986, the Government of Ontario had no central focus for literacy responsibility. Local school boards and other community organizations managed literacy activities, usually without links to the strategies and practices used elsewhere in Ontario or the other provinces. The Ontario government identified literacy as a priority concern with its 1986 Government Plan for Adult Basic Literacy. The plan outlined the Ontario government's responsibilities for adult literacy training and laid the groundwork for today's network of literacy programs.

In October 1993, the Ontario government created the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board (OTAB). OTAB's Literacy Section became responsible for setting adult literacy policy and for funding and supporting literacy programming and services in the province. The Ministry of Education and Training and the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services also offer some literacy programming.

Because the Ontario government believes that literacy is the foundation of further skills training, the Literacy Section's mandate is twofold:

- to develop a highly skilled work force; and
- to help individuals and communities adjust to changes in technology, global trade relationships, competition, and economic restructuring.

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<sup>1</sup> Persons who reported having no skills are listed in Level 1.

In June 1994, OTAB adopted an accountability framework and quality standards for all the adult literacy education programs that it funds throughout Ontario.

## **Structure of the Literacy Program**

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To respond to the needs of adult learners, the Literacy Section of OTAB recognizes four cultural streams—Anglophones, Francophones, aboriginal people, and people who are deaf. In addition, Ontario supports specific literacy programs for women, members of ethnocultural minority groups, seniors, and persons with developmental disabilities.

The Literacy Section funds 170 community agencies, 84 school boards, 25 colleges, and 3 labour organizations to provide adult literacy training in the community and the workplace.

- Community programs
  - Ontario Basic Skills*
  - Adult Basic Literacy/Numeracy*
  - Ontario Community Literacy*
  - Literacy Field Development and Support*
- Workplace programs
  - Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace*
  - Workplace/Work Force Equity and Basic Skills*

## **Community Programs**

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### **Ontario Basic Skills**

Ontario Basic Skills is an upgrading program for adults who face barriers at work because their literacy, numeracy, and basic workplace skills are below the Grade 12 level. Ontario residents can enrol in the program if they are aged 25 or older and are eligible to work in the province. The program accepts trainees on a first-come, first-served basis.

Teachers at 22 English and 3 French colleges of applied arts and technology assess participants' skills and goals to develop individual training plans. Each year, about 13,000 people at more than 100 sites across the province participate in the Ontario Basic Skills program. In Scarborough, for example, Centennial College of Applied Arts and Technology offers literacy training through this program.



### *Centennial College and Metro Social Services working together*

In Centennial College's Ontario Basic Skills program, tutors help learners identify their own needs and interests. They constantly assess the learners' progress, giving formal and informal opportunities to learn and practise literacy and numeracy. Tutors also offer specific activities to improve learners' life skills and to help them be independent.

*Centennial College is committed to its learners in the Ontario Basic Skills program. The program creates ample opportunities for learners to increase their literacy and numeracy skills, life skills, and critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.*

Centennial College enjoys a strong partnership with Metro Social Services and regularly meets with representatives of this municipal agency. In this way, both organizations can make sure they are responding to their clients' and their organizations' changing needs. Metro Social Services emphasizes the need for basic-skills training for its clients, particularly single parents. Metro, along with the other levels of government, is currently developing a client database that will make it much easier to place clients in appropriate programs.

### **Adult Basic Literacy/Numeracy**

Through this program, 77 English and 7 French school boards provide adults with basic literacy and numeracy training, either directly or in cooperation with community groups. Another six English public school boards in Metro Toronto and one in Ottawa deliver the Adult Basic Literacy/Numeracy program without funding from OTAB.

The program's clients are adults whose literacy skills are below the Grade 8 level, and include older workers, offenders, seniors, and persons with developmental disabilities. In 1994-95, about 22,000 people participated in Ontario's Adult Basic Literacy/Numeracy program. Teachers can provide instruction one-on-one, in small groups, or in classes offered in community settings or in schools, such as those in the Peel Board of Education in Waterloo.

### *Adult Basic Literacy/Numeracy at the Peel Board*

The Peel Board of Education in Mississauga has drafted a mission statement for its version of the Adult Basic Literacy/Numeracy program. The statement includes such goals as establishing objectives with the learners, finding ways to assess reading, writing, and numeracy skills, and recommending training materials.

*The Peel Board of Education's staff and learners believe that life-long learning enhances self-esteem, independence, and responsibility, and permits individuals to contribute productively to a global society.*

At first, tutors provide learners with as much help as possible, which encourages commitment from the teacher and the learner and develops a sense of caring between them. To ensure this level of service remains constant, the school board encourages program managers or resource people to visit classes, providing assistance to tutors and students and clarifying any issues that may arise. Program managers also help teachers of challenged learners by analyzing their situations and modifying the program as required. By liaising with the teachers in this way, program managers ensure that each learner is successfully integrated into the literacy program.

The Peel Board also holds staff meetings and workshops to investigate various methods to teach reading, writing, and numeracy to adults, and has developed a teacher evaluation process.

## **Ontario Community Literacy**

The Ontario Community Literacy program is delivered by non-profit community agencies and focuses on learners who have been unable to benefit from literacy programs offered by other institutions. Tutors teach participants either one-on-one or in small groups using methods, curricula, and materials that respond to the specific needs of the participants and their communities. The learners' experiences, interests, culture, and personal goals are incorporated into their individual literacy activities.

Each year, about 16,000 people enrol in the 170 community-based literacy programs funded by the Ontario Community Literacy program. There are 101 English programs, 30 French programs, 31 programs in aboriginal communities, 5 programs for people who are deaf, and 3 programs for people who are deaf and blind. Waterloo's Core Literacy is one example of the Ontario Community Literacy program at work.

### ***Core Literacy***

The Region of Waterloo's Core Literacy program has been able to increase the number of learners it serves while improving the quality of its programs, by becoming more efficient. It teaches its tutors to deliver literacy training to small groups, has introduced assessment materials and has added more training workshops for its volunteers. It also runs an orientation session for learners to encourage regular attendance and independent study, and conducts follow-up telephone interviews to track learners' success after they have left the program. Core Literacy plans to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs in 1996.

*To ensure equal access to the program, Core Literacy staff members try to provide support services to their learners whenever possible. These services include child care, transportation, decentralized locations, home visits, outreach to ethnocultural minority groups, wheelchair-accessible offices, and partnership projects with other programs.*

The learners help to plan Core Literacy's programs by setting personal goals, choosing the learning materials and approaches they want to use, and assessing their progress. The fact that two of Core Literacy's board members are learners, including the chairperson, ensures that the board considers learners' experiences and perceptions when making decisions.

## **Literacy Field Development and Support**

Through this program, the Ontario government and the National Literacy Secretariat share the cost of a variety of literacy services and projects in Ontario. The program provides money to provincial or regional not-for-profit organizations that are already involved in adult literacy. These organizations use the money to train practitioners, organize conferences, and develop and distribute resource materials.

The program also funds other types of services, including a resource centre called Alpha Ontario, a program database called Alphabase, and a computer network called AlphaCom. It supports regional desktop publishing units that develop, publish, and distribute literacy training materials, including four English-language units, a French-language unit called Centre FORA, and an aboriginal unit called Ningwakwe which is under development. This program has also helped organizations like Literacy Link Eastern Ontario to bring literacy practitioners in a region together to share techniques and strategies and build a strong network.

### ***Literacy Link Eastern Ontario***

Literacy Link Eastern Ontario, located in Kingston, is a network of regional, county, and local literacy-programming representatives from the region. This network has helped its members increase their awareness of regional literacy issues and to gain a regional and county perspective on literacy activities.

At network meetings, members share information on regional literacy activities and county representatives relay the information to the programs operating in their areas. These county representatives also bring the needs of learners in their counties to the attention of other network members. A learner committee provides reports to the network, and network staff help assess the needs of learners through telephone, fax, or database communication.

***The Literacy Link Eastern Ontario network is continually involved in implementing and supporting provincial literacy programs in the region. For example, it will produce six different teaching material packages to benefit the programs in the region, and will hold workshops for regional practitioners on portfolio development and on the importance of goal-setting.***

The network is coordinating a project to develop a common process for assessing individuals' literacy skills so that literacy learners will no longer have to repeat the assessment process to enrol in different literacy programs. The network also plans to be active in the



Workplace/Work Force Equity and Basic Skills program to help address workplace training needs in the region.

## **Workplace Programs**

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### **Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace**

Through this program, the Ontario government helps unions, employers, and their agents offer literacy, numeracy, and other basic-skills training to employees in the workplace. The program is available in a variety of Ontario workplaces, including hospitals, manufacturing companies, restaurants, paper mills, and steel mills.

For union-initiated training, union members deliver training to their co-workers through one of the following three major labour organizations:

- the Hamilton and District Labour Council;
- the Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto and York Region; or
- the Ontario Federation of Labour through its BEST program (available in English and French).

Students eligible to enrol in the program include employees whose lack of literacy and other basic skills prevents them from participating fully in the workplace and society. The program is also open to laid-off workers and workers in a plant or other establishment that is closing. More than 2,100 people register in the Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace program every year, in programs such as Waterloo's English in the Working Environment program.

#### ***English in the Working Environment in Waterloo***

The English in the Working Environment program has been providing workplace literacy training in the Region of Waterloo for close to 14 years. The program was initiated by community members who recognized that the work site was an ideal location for developing literacy skills. In the program, staff members work with companies and learners to offer classes at a variety of times and to evaluate the program regularly. In this way, they make sure that the program curriculum is appropriate and that learners feel comfortable participating in the classes.

*Through the years, the program has attracted a team of committed and knowledgeable workers who constantly adjust the way they deliver literacy services to meet the changing needs of workers at various types of work sites.*



## **Workplace/Work Force Equity and Basic Skills**

This program, which began in September 1995, amalgamates three previous programs—the Multicultural Workplace program, the employer-initiated stream of the Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace program, and the Labour Adjustment Preparation program.

Colleges, school boards and community agencies deliver the program, which supports such activities as assessing learners' needs, developing training plans, and maintaining and upgrading workers' basic skills to meet current workplace needs and to adjust to future changes in the work environment. Ontario companies, businesses, plant-closure committees, employers, and employees are all eligible to participate in the program.

Based on the enrolment figures of the three previous programs, the Literacy Section expects about 9,000 participants to enrol in the Workplace/Work Force Equity and Basic Skills program each year.

## **Success Factors**

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The Ontario government recognizes the importance of understanding the diversity of adult learners. To support this diversity, it funds literacy programs in English, French, aboriginal languages, and American Sign Language. These programs are conducted in a variety of settings, including schools, colleges, community organizations, and the workplace, to allow for choice in addressing adult learner needs.

As a testament to its commitment to diversity, the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board's 22-member board of directors reflects Ontario's population. Each board member was nominated by a provincial organization representing business, labour, women, persons with disabilities, members of ethnocultural minority groups, Francophones, or educators.

To ensure its programs are successful, the province of Ontario also considers all feedback it receives from participants and incorporates these suggestions into its programming strategies.

## **Creative Partnerships**

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By working with organizations at the regional and local levels, the Ontario government has created cross-sectoral partnerships committed to providing effective literacy education. Because of these partnerships, adults are able to move with greater ease among literacy services according to their needs.

For example, in Victoria County, the school board and a community agency called Literacy Outreach jointly offer one-on-one literacy training up to the Grade 8 level. As a next step,

the school board offers a small-group program in the evening, to which Literacy Outreach can refer clients who want to work toward the Grade 12 level. Both the school board and Literacy Outreach are free to refer adults to the local college's Ontario Basic Skills program, where they can also pursue more advanced skills training.

## **Budget**

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In 1995-96, the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board committed the following amounts to support adult literacy programs and services:

Ontario Basic Skills . . . . .	\$27,000,000
Ontario Community Literacy . . . . .	11,500,000
Adult Basic Literacy/Numeracy . . . . .	10,100,000
Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace . . . . .	3,400,000
Literacy Field Development and Support . . . . .	3,300,000
Workplace/Work Force Equity and Basic Skills (projected) . . . . .	2,000,000
Administrative expenses . . . . .	<u>2,000,000</u>
Total:	<u>\$59,300,000</u>

## **Staff**

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Twenty one staff members work full-time on adult literacy and basic education programming in the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board's Literacy Section.

## **Contacts**

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## **Prince Edward Island: Dedicated Volunteers and Effective Partnerships**

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In its 1989 survey of literacy skills, Statistics Canada found the sampling variability too high to be comfortable releasing estimates on the literacy rate of adults in Canada's smallest province. However, Prince Edward Island's literacy rates are most likely on a par with the other Maritime provinces and below the national average.

There is no legislation or policy that specifically addresses adult literacy education in Prince Edward Island. In the 1970s, the province operated federally funded upgrading programs such as the Basic Training for Skills Development program for clients who needed literacy training. However, to fulfil the needs of learners who could not attend classes during the day, a group of instructors from this program volunteered to conduct literacy training during the evenings. These volunteers formed the first of six literacy councils in the province.

As a direct result of this volunteer commitment, the provincial government identified literacy as a priority concern. On June 8, 1994, the premier of Prince Edward Island created the Office of Higher Education, Training and Adult Learning, and announced the appointment of a cabinet minister to head the office.

The Office became responsible for setting the province's adult literacy policy and for supporting literacy programming and services for Islanders. These responsibilities include providing funding for community and workplace programs and setting post-secondary policy, by liaising with the boards of the university, Holland College, and the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission. The Office also supports the province's adult and continuing education programs, its post-secondary vocational, trade, and apprenticeship training, and its student aid program.

### **Structure of the Literacy Program**

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The Office of Higher Education, Training and Adult Learning works in collaboration with a province-wide umbrella organization called the PEI Literacy Alliance, which is made up of representatives of adult education programs in the province's communities. The PEI Literacy Alliance was formed in 1990 to:

- promote awareness of literacy activities and concerns within Prince Edward Island and across Canada;
- advise government, educational institutions, and existing or potential literacy organizations and practitioners;
- make recommendations for programs and services to improve the level of literacy in the province;

- promote and support communication and information-sharing among existing and potential literacy practitioners, all levels of government, educational institutions, organizations and interested individuals; and
- coordinate literacy improvement efforts and activities.

Throughout Prince Edward Island, Alliance members administer literacy programming through community college campuses, literacy councils, and community groups and agencies. These organizations offer training at a variety of levels, from teaching basic literacy skills to preparing learners for high-school equivalency and college programs. These organizations offer academic upgrading in various formats, including the classroom setting, one-on-one tutoring, and computer-assisted learning programs. In addition to teaching literacy and numeracy skills, many organizations provide instruction in computer technology, life skills, and job-search preparation.

In Prince Edward Island, this network of adult literacy training is offered in both the community and the workplace.

## **Adult Literacy in the Community**

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Community-based learning centres that show great potential are appearing across the province. If they are able to secure funding, these centres can make the programs outlined below available to learners in their communities.

### **The ‘Ready to Learn’ National Strategic Initiative**

This unique four-year national strategic initiative provides literacy training, counselling, work experience, academic upgrading, and skills training to 120 clients aged 18 to 30 who receive Unemployment Insurance or social assistance benefits. The federal and provincial governments share the cost of this program, and community organizations administer it.

In the first year, groups of eight learners are matched with tutors in community learning centres to participate in basic literacy programming. In the second year, learners receive academic upgrading and job placements. In the third and fourth years, learners receive skills training.

### **Learning and Reading Partners—A Family Literacy Program**

The mission of this national program is to work with individuals, families and communities to develop and deliver programs and strategies that promote life-long learning and enhance physical, mental, social and spiritual health. The Learning and Reading Partners (LRP) program fosters an environment where each person is a learning and health resource to themselves and to others.

To date, one-week training institutes for volunteer LRP instructors have been held in Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Saskatchewan. More than 800 parents have taken the 10-week course given by trained volunteers. LRP is sponsored by the PEI Literacy Alliance, with a national advisory committee, and by the National Literacy Secretariat.

## Spell Read Canada

Spell Read Canada is a private-sector company that provides literacy training to individuals with auditory processing difficulties and learning disabilities. Using a technique called Phonemic Analysis Training (PAT) that was originally designed for deaf students, Spell Read Canada has developed a program that provides learners who are unable to spell or read with basic literacy skills. Tutors can use the method in small groups or in one-on-one tutoring sessions. The company is adapting the technique to CD-ROM format for international distribution.

*Through Spell Read Canada's PAT program, many clients who have not had much success with traditional techniques are able to improve their literacy skills. Some learners, especially those who have difficulty spelling, improve after using the PAT technique for only a few weeks.*

## Holistic Adult Curriculum Program

In conjunction with Holland College, the PEI Literacy Alliance is developing an adult education model that follows holistic principles. The approach is geared to instructors in small-group and classroom settings, and has a learning inventory component integrated throughout. The Alliance is testing the program materials with learners in the Montague and Summerside area, and hopes to use the materials with instructors in the community and college systems.

## Laubach Literacy Councils

Throughout Prince Edward Island, there are six literacy councils active under the Laubach banner. Laubach Literacy Canada is a private organization that publishes literacy training materials, up to the Grade 6 level, based on the Laubach method of teaching. It also produces promotional materials and serves as a resource for councils that are providing one-on-one tutoring.

These literacy councils either serve certain geographic areas of the province or focus on specific groups of learners. First Nations people in the province have adopted Laubach methods to create their own literacy council and programming. The councils recruit and train tutors and match them with students for one-on-one training. For 1995-96, the Laubach provincial executive and the six councils received a total operating grant of \$15,200 from the provincial government.



## **Adult Literacy in the Workplace**

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The Office of Higher Education, Training and Adult Learning also supports programs that provide opportunities to workers to upgrade their literacy and numeracy skills in the workplace. As part of its mandate, the Office emphasizes the development of an understanding of the province's labour market, as well as the skill levels and training needs of Islanders.

### **The Workplace Literacy Program**

The Workplace Literacy Program is co-sponsored by Laubach Literacy Canada and the provincial government, and helps employers offer literacy, numeracy, and other basic-skills training to employed workers in a variety of workplaces, such as hospitals and factories.

The workplace program uses Laubach tutoring materials and techniques in a one-on-one format in three workplace settings. Through this program, the province has developed a human-resource development strategy that identifies training priorities and goals. The Office works in partnership with other government agencies and the private sector to develop more effective systems that employers can use to identify and communicate their employees' training needs.

## **Creative Partnerships**

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The Office values its cooperative relationship with the National Literacy Secretariat, and appreciates the support it receives from the Secretariat to develop workplace literacy initiatives. In fact, this provincial-federal partnership has led to many quality projects and initiatives.

The Office also works with college campuses, literacy councils, and community organizations to deliver adult literacy training. By working with these organizations at the local levels, the provincial government has created effective partnerships for literacy education. Without these partnerships, the Office believes it would be close to impossible to fulfil its mandate of promoting and supporting adult literacy and upgrading programming.

The Office also has close working relationships with other provincial government departments. It works with the Department of Education to ensure an integrated range of learning programs is available through the elementary, secondary, and adult learning systems. The Office also works with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism to coordinate the province's economic development initiatives and training programs. In this way, the province maximizes its prospects for economic success and Islanders' employment opportunities.



## Success Factors

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Prince Edward Island attributes the success of its adult literacy training program to the dedicated individuals who volunteer their time and energy to help learners. In addition, the informal communications network that exists on a small island has also been instrumental in ensuring that news about literacy programs is shared.

Another factor that contributes to the literacy program's success is the good working relationship between the people who deliver literacy training and the people who administer provincial government programs in Prince Edward Island. This mutual respect has led to an increase in cooperative ventures and the creation of new projects.

## Budget

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Prince Edward Island's adult literacy program is operated by the Adult and Continuing Education Division of the Office of Higher Education, Training and Adult Learning. No distinction is made between the administrative costs for literacy programming and other initiatives. In total, the province sets aside \$74,300 to fund its literacy projects.

## Staff

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Two staff members work part-time on adult literacy and basic education programming in Prince Edward Island's Office of Higher Education, Training and Adult Learning.

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## Quebec: A Focus on Learners' Needs

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Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Everyday Activities <sup>1</sup>	Adults aged 16-69 (thousands)	Reading Levels			
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Canada	18,024	7%	9%	22%	62%
Quebec	4,721	6%	13%	25%	57%

The 1989 Statistics Canada survey cited above shows Quebec's adult literacy rates below the national averages. Currently, nearly 900,000 adult Quebecers have very limited reading ability. In 1993, the Quebec Department of Education conducted a study that found that, of individuals with low literacy skills, almost 80 percent had not completed high school. Not surprisingly, therefore, 75 percent had annual incomes of less than \$20,000, and 46 percent had not worked or looked for work in the last year.

Although there is no formal policy on literacy training in Quebec, the provincial government has been concerned about the problem of low literacy skills since the 1960s. During that decade's educational reform, the provincial government's Parent Commission recommended improvements in basic training. Many people believed that, by giving all Quebecers the right to free access to training to complete their high school education at any age, the province would ensure that all would have adequate literacy skills. Time would prove, however, that the answers to improving adult literacy skills required a broader, more learner-centred approach.

In the 1960s, basic training courses were made available through the federal manpower training program to people who had not completed high school. These courses, called *Cours préparatoires à la formation professionnelle* [pre-professional training courses], included a range of programs, from basic literacy training to high school completion courses. In the early 1970s, however, the federal government withdrew its support of manpower programs for people with less than a Grade 9 education, and these training activities were reduced.

At the same time, the Department of Education began making literacy a priority by mentioning it in its policy and action plans. The Department encouraged innovative approaches and training methods, to promote the emergence of new literacy programs in adult learners' centres, school boards and ethnic communities. In addition, the anglophone

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<sup>1</sup> Persons who reported having no skills are listed in Level 1.

community had begun organizing community associations to administer volunteer-based literacy training to adults.

The 1980s marked the real turning point in government action on literacy. During that decade, there was much debate within the literacy community on various approaches to adult education. The Department of Education introduced the Équipe d'aide au développement [development assistance team], which offered substantial support to literacy projects and the development of

training tools. In the early 1980s, the Adult Education Branch held its first seminar for community adult literacy groups. Subsequently, 12 of the 15 groups in attendance formed the Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation du Québec [Quebec association of community adult literacy groups]. The Regroupement, with its mandate to promote the right of Quebecers to access literacy programming, quickly became recognized as a key voice in Quebec's literacy community.

*The Department of Education actively supports the Regroupement, and regularly consults the main representatives of community literacy groups to help define directions and ensure the ongoing development of community literacy training.*

In 1983, the Department of Education introduced a framework to involve the province's regions in literacy programming by offering financial support for Tables régionales de concertation en alphabétisation [regional literacy coordinating committees]. The committees brought together representatives of school boards and community literacy groups who were responsible for literacy programming, to improve the skills of literacy instructors.

The Équipe interrégionale en alphabétisation [inter-regional literacy team], with members from across the province, circulated information on literacy training and supported regional initiatives and province-wide action. The team also acted as a resource centre, and provided consulting services to the provincial government.

In 1985, the provincial government opened up the education budget envelope, giving the school boards more flexibility to train any person who signed up for literacy programs. For the school boards, literacy programming was changing from a community-based education movement to a mainstream training program. In 1988, the federal Department of the Secretary of State and the Quebec Department of Education agreed to support joint federal-provincial initiatives organized by accredited community literacy groups and school boards. These activities helped to establish literacy priorities, promote public awareness of the issue, develop teaching materials, coordinate research efforts, and share information.

These changes and cooperative activities helped to develop and increase enrolment in literacy programs offered by the school boards. Registration climbed to 16,133 in 1988 and by 1992 it had reached 32,822. However, in 1993, the provincial budget envelope was closed and the Department of Income Security set quotas for returns to school. Enrolment in school board programs dropped to 20,107 by 1995.



## Structure of the Literacy Program

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The Department of Education is responsible for literacy programming in Quebec and funds literacy programming in school boards and community literacy groups.

### School Boards

Under the *Public Education Act* and Quebec's education policy, all Quebecers have the right to free literacy training. The Department gives each school board a closed budgetary envelope for general adult education and the boards allocate amounts to literacy training and other services according to the needs of the people in their areas.

Most of the 105 school boards that the Minister of Education has authorized to provide general adult education offer literacy programming. The programs are offered year-round, in school buildings, on business premises, or in community centres. While most training is organized in groups of 10 to 12, teaching staff meet with individual learners to follow up on the students' training plans.

The Department of Education published a literacy syllabus called the *Guide de formation sur mesure en alphabétisation* [guide to customized literacy training]. This publication provides guidance on orientation, objectives, and subject matter for literacy courses and suggests ways for programs to link literacy training to learners' everyday lives. The guide was intended to help create programs that inspire students to take control of their own training agenda.

### Community Literacy Groups

In 1990-91, the Department of Education established the Programme de soutien à l'alphabétisation populaire autonome [support program for community literacy groups]. This program funds community educational groups and so helps improve access to literacy training and the level of training offered. To receive financial support, every organization must be accredited as a community literacy group by the Department of Education. It must:

*The province's literacy programming allows adults to increase acquire listening, oral expression, reading, writing, and mathematics skills. The learning relates to their day-to-day activities and supports their interest in pursuing further studies.*

*To respond to the difficulties that people face in becoming involved in literacy training, community literacy groups provide services adapted to their everyday needs.*

- be a non-profit organization incorporated under provincial law;

- be recognized for its community activism, its ties to the community, and its interest in and capacity to work in the literacy training field; and
- carry out educational programming, particularly training workshops.

In 1995-96, 122 community literacy groups from all regions in Quebec received grants to offer literacy training. At the beginning of 1996, the Department expected to give accreditation to 30 new community literacy groups. The Department of Education doubled the budget for the program, to \$5 million in 1995-96, allowing for grant increases in established programs and a more balanced regional distribution of grants.

The Department has established regional literacy coordinating committees in each of its regional offices, which will take over from headquarters the management of community literacy groups.

## **Research on the Success Factors of Literacy Training**

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The Quebec Department of Education has contracted with Laval University's Centre de recherche et d'intervention sur la réussite scolaire [centre for research and intervention into success in school] to develop a working definition of success in literacy training.

*Laval University is conducting research on the factors that contribute to successful literacy training in collaboration with two working groups—one composed of school board representatives, and the other of members of community literacy groups.*

Two researchers conducting studies for the Department of Education have identified the following factors that influence the success of literacy training:

- the adult learning environment;
- the organizational training framework;
- the governmental environment;
- the social, cultural and economic environment;
- the living environment of adult learners; and
- the individual adult learner.

## **The Adult Learning Environment**

Many researchers agree that socio-pedagogic factors—everything from the environment in which training is offered, to the teaching style used—affect educational success. One researcher believes that cognitive, environmental, and socio-pedagogic factors all influence

success in school. Practice and research, however, both tend to minimize the importance of socio-pedagogic factors.

Some training centres have tested models that encourage peer tutoring or cooperative learning for adults, and have found them to be very effective. These models include the following characteristics.

*It is easier to learn when the subjects being studied have some relevance to adults' needs and problems, and when the information relates to their previous learning and experiences.*

- *The lessons must inspire motivation.*

For adult learners to maintain their motivation, it is important that they see a clear connection between the goals of learning and their own training plans. This requires understanding, not rote learning. Training must take place in an environment and a relationship of good will, making the adult the main architect of his own knowledge.

- *Instructors must consider the learning style of each adult.*

It is important to teach adults how to develop the means to learn efficiently and continue to learn after they have received the training. Participants' rhythms of learning must be respected.

- *The lessons must use tools that encourage the transfer of learning.*

Especially in literacy training, learning that does not apply to real life is not often absorbed or retained by the learner. Using real-life situations increases and maintains motivation, which is the prime factor for success. Instructors must develop tools to encourage the transfer of learning to everyday life, and to verify and evaluate the success of the application of new skills to the real world. This requires instructors to state the expectations for learners' achievements and make connections to learners' training goals.

*The more adults perceive the reasons for which they are pursuing their training, the greater the likelihood that their interest will be sustained, and that they will be successful.*

- *The relationship between the instructor and learners is key.*

When teachers welcome adults in a straightforward and unconditional way, adopt attitudes free of judgement and prejudice, and emphasize the successes and the progress of the adult learner, there is a much greater chance that the learners will develop a taste and motivation for pursuing his studies.

## The Organizational Training Framework

The quality of education is influenced by the institutions themselves, through their policies, styles, activities, and how they respond to the needs of adult learners. Several studies have demonstrated that the general climate of a school or training centre has an important influence on educational success. In a healthy and supportive climate, learners help set the direction of the centre and the content of the learning program. Rules and standards must not take precedence over activities or innovations. Adults should be able to speak of a learning environment as 'their' centre and to consider themselves part of a group with certain values. The staff and learners then become participants in a dialogue with the community, in a process that can support the organization's growth and success.

*Rules and standards cannot take precedence over initiatives or innovations.*

## The Governmental Environment

The way that the Government of Quebec responds to the challenge of improving literacy skills ultimately influences the success of its literacy training activities. The mission statements of several provincial departments concerned with education define how adults can acquire basic training and work towards self-fulfilment. The money that government allocates, the conditions under which people work, and the resources made available for experimentation, research and development are all elements that influence the success of literacy programming.

Independent literacy training groups insist on their need for stable financing so that they can ensure continuing, high quality service for adult learners. Government must adopt a coherent, long-term plan of action for literacy training that deals with training, development, the promotion of literacy and the rights of adult learners, and that coordinates the efforts of all the various departments involved.

The design of government programs can also support the learner's freedom to choose to learn. An individual should be able to register for training when she feels that need, because it forms a part of her goals, of the path of her life and training, not because of the terms of a government program. Learning, and the results that flow from it, are much more significant if the person has chosen to learn to read and if that represents a need that she has identified for herself.



## The Social, Cultural and Economic Environment

The social, cultural and economic environment can make it easier or harder to improve one's literacy skills. In effect, the success of literacy training depends on social conditions helping the adult learner to develop. For example, difficult living

conditions—uncertain or inadequate finances, a lack of daycare, unemployment and harsh working conditions—are often cited by community literacy groups as major obstacles to the success of training projects. It is difficult to learn when one is fighting for survival.

*How do you study on an empty stomach? It is difficult to learn when one is fighting for survival.*

Given the reality of many learners' lives and experiences, it is important for literacy programs to define learners' success by more than the receipt of a diploma. Learning and business groups must work together to identify job sectors that will be accessible to individuals once they have completed their literacy training.

New readers also need much high quality, relevant reading materials to read. How can a person take part fully in society if reading a newspaper requires several years of schooling, if legal or administrative texts are incomprehensible, and if general information is too complex to reach its intended audience? Libraries, newspapers, governments and community groups must take responsibility for producing plain language texts that encourage learners to keep on reading.

## The Living Environment of Adult Learners

A person in training is part of a living environment where activities and relationships centre on the written word. It is necessary to be familiar with these ties to the written word in the community to understand the context in which literacy training takes place. For example, if the community in which the adult lives outside the training centre is completely dissociated from the adult education project, learners risk losing momentum.

## The Individual Adult Learner

Some authors identify three kinds of personal factors that play a role in the success of literacy programming: physiological, intellectual and emotional factors.

*Physiological factors* that can jeopardize learning include fatigue or a person's overall state of health. In disadvantaged communities, many people have poor health often caused by inadequate nutrition, irregular meals and rest, or an overload of work at home or away.

*Intellectual factors* relate to learners' intellectual capacities, their style of learning, and previous studies. A person's intellectual capacities influence more than anything else the capacity to understand instructions and content, and the pleasure of dealing with symbols and

ideas. The style of learning influences the way a person approaches learning and determines his strong points, his weaknesses, and his reactions to the training procedures and teaching formulas used. Previous studies can either help or hinder current learning.

*Emotional factors* refer to people's motivation and levels of anxiety. Often an adult learner's motivation is elicited and maintained by external factors, factors other than her own desires, needs and wants. If an adult really wants to acquire a taste for learning, it is important to put her in touch with internal motivators such as a need to learn a specific skill, a desire to improve one's self-image, or a wish to belong to a group.

## **Creative Partnerships**

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There are several organizations and government departments that play a critical role as partners in Quebec's literacy programming.

- The Department of Employment, through its Labour Quebec centres, refers people on social assistance who are able to work to literacy training.
- The sociétés régionales de développement de la main-d'oeuvre [regional workforce development corporations] work with regional education partners to offer literacy training to employed workers and those who need continuing education to keep their jobs.
- Two of the main labour union federations—the Quebec Federation of Labour and the Centrale des syndicats démocratiques [alliance of democratic unions]—help promote literacy training by:
  - raising the awareness among leaders of union locals and businesses of the problems related to low literacy; and
  - promoting the development of literacy training for union members by school boards and independent groups, and in the work place.

The other main provincial partners in literacy training are:

- Regroupement des Groupes Populaires en Alphabétisation du Québec
- Équipe Interrégionale en Alphabétisation
- Quebec Literacy Working Group
- Literacy Volunteers of Quebec
- Literacy Partners of Quebec
- Fondation Québécoise pour l'Alphabétisation

## **Budget**

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For the year 1994-95, Quebec's Department of Education allocated \$40 million for literacy training to the province's school boards. During the same year, the department allocated more than \$2.5 million to its community literacy group program. For 1995-96, it has doubled that budget to \$5 million.

## **Staff**

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Four staff members work full-time and four work part-time on literacy services in the Quebec Department of Education's Adult Education Branch.

## **Contact**

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## Saskatchewan: Innovative Communities in Project Partnerships

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Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Everyday Activities <sup>1</sup>	Adults aged 16-69 (thousands)	Reading Levels			
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Canada	18,024	7%	9%	22%	62%
Saskatchewan	632	3% <sup>2</sup>	5% <sup>2</sup>	19%	72%

According to the 1989 Statistics Canada literacy survey, Saskatchewan has the highest adult literacy rates in Canada, a testament to the success of the province's literacy programming. In 1987, Saskatchewan's current literacy policy and programs began to take shape. The 1986 Census had shown that about 20 percent of Saskatchewan's adults had low literacy skills. The province therefore identified literacy as a major priority, and made it part of Saskatchewan Education's strategy to develop a policy framework and action plan for post-secondary education. The province's 1987 policy document called *Preparing for the Year 2000* supported this priority status, and another departmental discussion paper, *Literacy in Saskatchewan: A Blueprint for Action*, provided the foundation for a province-wide campaign to increase literacy rates.

In September 1987, the provincial government launched the Saskatchewan Literacy Campaign, which it had developed in collaboration with the federal government. The mandate of the Saskatchewan Literacy Campaign was to inform the public about literacy issues and to offer literacy programming to the province's adults. The province established the Saskatchewan Literacy Council, giving it a three-year mandate to oversee the Saskatchewan Literacy Campaign and to find ways to develop provincial literacy initiatives.

The council retained the literacy programming mandate until 1990. Over the next few years, the provincial government integrated literacy programming into various units in Saskatchewan Education. In June 1996, the Adult Basic Education and Sponsored Programs Unit in Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training took over the province's literacy initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> Persons who reported having no skills are listed in Level 1.

<sup>2</sup> Users are cautioned that the sampling variability is high.

The Unit's Program Manager for Literacy manages literacy programming, which includes administering the province's literacy budget and coordinating the federal grant selection process. The section also monitors the province's literacy programs and liaises with local, provincial, and national literacy groups and networks.

Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and the National Literacy Secretariat share the cost of funding the province's literacy programs. Provincial funding is used to deliver literacy programs and services, and federal funding is used to increase public awareness, develop new projects, conduct research, and produce literacy curriculum materials.

Although the Saskatchewan Literacy Campaign ended in 1991 and the provincial government disbanded the literacy council shortly afterwards, literacy remains a priority in the province's adult educational programming. Since 1991, about 12,000 learners have developed their literacy skills through the province's literacy initiatives.

## **Structure of the Literacy Program**

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Each region delivers its literacy programs in a variety of ways. While learners can visit learning centres or attend formal classes, most of the province's literacy programs are delivered by volunteers. More than 1,300 people in communities across Saskatchewan volunteer their time to help make the programs work. Saskatchewan Education provides funding to help train the volunteers and coordinate their efforts.

The regions tailor their literacy programs to meet the community's needs, and all programs involve extensive volunteer instruction and cooperation with local organizations. Volunteer tutors, instructors, and literacy coordinators deliver the literacy programming, which includes pairing learners with tutors, conducting sessions in small groups, and encouraging independent study.

*Each year, about 2,500 adults benefit from the province's literacy programs.*

The programs develop the specific reading, writing, and numeracy skills of the students, and provide volunteer training and support. Graduates of literacy programs can gain access to further literacy development opportunities through adult basic education and adult secondary education programs, which the province's colleges deliver.

## **Types of Literacy Programming**

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Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training works closely with members of the literacy community to identify various groups in the province that have specific needs,

and to provide literacy programming that fulfils these needs. The province supports the following types of literacy programming:

- workplace literacy
- aboriginal literacy
- special-needs programming
- family literacy
- Francophone literacy
- volunteer tutor instruction

## **Workplace Literacy**

The Saskatchewan government has worked with both public- and private-sector organizations to develop its workplace literacy strategy.

### ***The WEST (Workers' Education for Skill Training) Program***

In 1991-92, the National Literacy Secretariat provided funding to the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour to develop the Workers' Education and Skills Training (WEST) program. This program, which was designed to operate in unionized workplaces, encourages partnerships between management and unions to support literacy training that meets the employees' specific needs. Through the WEST program, coworkers are trained to deliver the workplace literacy courses. Employers share the cost of delivering the program.

The program works in harmony with the volunteer-based literacy programs already operating in the province. The program increases public awareness of the need for literacy training in many forms and attracts learners who did not identify themselves during the formal literacy campaign but who may be able to benefit from training in the workplace setting.

***Every year, WEST program staff members hold two course-leader workshops for course facilitators. They also work with management and unions to develop workplace education programs designed to fit the organization's needs.***

Since 1992, Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and the Crown Investments Corporation have shared the cost of supporting the WEST program. The WEST program employs two full-time staff members who travel the province contacting prospective employers interested in developing literacy programs for their workers. In 1994-95, 102 employees in 14 workplace sites enrolled in the WEST program.



### ***The Workplace Education Consortium***

In 1994-95, Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training began working with the National Literacy Secretariat, The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, and the Regina Public Library to develop a provincial workplace literacy strategy.

In May 1995, the Workplace Education Consortium was introduced as part of Saskatchewan's strategy to raise public awareness about workplace education, and to find ways for small businesses to benefit from literacy services. The consortium's members are representatives from the province's education, business and labour sectors. The consortium is presently working on an information kit for small businesses on workplace education programming and needs assessment. The consortium also plans to develop a speakers' bureau.

In addition, in September 1995, the province held a literacy conference that promoted workplace education, hosted by the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

### **Aboriginal Literacy**

Literacy rates are lowest among the province's aboriginal people, particularly those who live in northern Saskatchewan. A 1989 report called *Literacy Learning in Saskatchewan: A Review of Adult Literacy Programs* estimated that at least 45 percent of the aboriginal population in Saskatchewan could benefit from literacy programming.

The literacy needs of aboriginal people in Saskatchewan are met through regional literacy programming. During the Saskatchewan Literacy Campaign, the province supported a program called *Beat the Street*, which was based on a literacy program developed in Ontario. When this program ended, the Regina Public Library developed an aboriginal literacy program that trained volunteer tutors and matched them with learners. In 1993, the program was transferred to *Circle Project*, a Regina-based community organization.

### ***Circle Project***

Provincial and municipal governments financially support *Circle Project*, a community organization that offers an array of community programs and services to aboriginal people living in Regina. In that city, there is a proportionately higher population of aboriginal people with lower level literacy skills, compared to other regions of the province. *Circle Project's* philosophy incorporates mental and spiritual healing with educational and social development.

Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training provides an annual grant to *Circle Project* to deliver literacy programming to aboriginal youth and adults. The program is classroom-based and gives participants access to a range of programming, from lower level literacy and numeracy skills training to Grade 12 equivalency preparation. The program



also ensures that learners have access to life-skills programs that use the aboriginal culture's oral tradition of holistic healing. This tradition includes healing and talking circles, anger management, parenting skills, art therapy, physical education, sweatlodge ceremonies, womenspeak and menspeak groups, and values clarification.

Each year, about 90 aboriginal learners ranging in age from 14 to 55 enrol in the *Circle Project* program. Many of the learners are aboriginal people who have either been referred by other community agencies or who drop in at the program's location.

The program has recently received funding from the National Literacy Secretariat to develop an aboriginal peer tutoring program to supplement the current literacy programming.

### **Special-Needs Programming**

The provincial government recognizes the diverse literacy programming needs of special-needs learners, including new Canadians, people with disabilities, aboriginal people and young adults. Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training works with private-sector organizations to provide specialized programming for these learners.

#### ***Saskatchewan Education and the Neil Squire Foundation help physically challenged learners***

In February 1995, Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and the Neil Squire Foundation coordinated a special-needs initiative to help physically challenged learners enhance their literacy skills. With a grant from the National Literacy Secretariat, Capilano College in British Columbia donated eight new Speech-Assisted Reading and Writing (SARAW) computer stations and software to selected delivery sites.

This talking-computer program allows individuals with severe disabilities to communicate and gain access to community literacy programs throughout the province. In addition, the program raises public awareness of the benefits of computer and communications technology in literacy instruction.

#### ***Computer-assisted instruction***

The Saskatchewan Literacy Campaign launched the Principles of Adult Literacy (PALS) project, a three-year agreement between Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and IBM Canada to introduce a computer-based literacy program to the province and to demonstrate its effectiveness. IBM Canada provided \$1 million worth of computer

*Circle Project's literacy program is based on a wellness model. Its philosophy encompasses a firm belief that, although education in itself aids in human development, it can be impossible to absorb the technicalities of the educational process if you are mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually unbalanced.*

hardware and software to educational and community organizations involved in literacy education.

About 3,000 adults and adolescents in more than 35 communities participated in the PALS project. In 1992-93, IBM donated the equipment to the institutions and organizations involved, and the computer-assisted literacy program is still being used in most of the original sites.

## **Family Literacy**

In 1994-95, Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training the National Literacy Secretariat and the Saskatchewan Literacy Network implemented a provincial strategy to promote family literacy programming.

### ***Family literacy grants***

As a result of this strategy, Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training gave a \$5,000 grant to Parkland Regional College to produce and promote a family literacy video called *Reading—A Family Affair*. The department also donated \$2,000 to publish promotional materials for the Saskatchewan Literacy Network's 1994 annual conference, which focussed on promoting family literacy initiatives.

### ***Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) offers family literacy programming***

All four campuses of SIAST have incorporated family literacy programs into the array of services they offer. The various family literacy models used suit the needs of the target community. For example, the Palliser campus family literacy program focusses on immigrant women, while the Kelsey campus program develops family literacy skills with adult basic education learners. The Wascana and Woodland programs promote public awareness and community development.

## **Francophone Literacy**

In 1992-93, Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training funded the francophone organization called *Service Fransaskois d'Education des Adultes* [Adult education services for Saskatchewan francophones] to provide literacy training and program support to the province's francophone community.

Although the community represents less than 2 percent of the province's population, there are many francophone groups spread throughout the province that need literacy support, especially for developing family literacy programming.

## Volunteer Tutor Instruction

Provincial grants are used primarily to support the coordination of the province's volunteer tutor program. Through the program, tutors learn how to meet the literacy needs of diverse groups, including people with learning disabilities, employees, aboriginal people, single parents, new Canadians and seniors.

## Creative Partnerships

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The role of Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training in providing literacy programming is primarily administrative but the department is involved in a number of initiatives as a facilitator and partner. The province has partnerships with the following organizations:

- the Saskatchewan Literacy Network
- the Regina Public Library
- READ Saskatoon
- regional colleges
- the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST)

## Saskatchewan Literacy Network

One of Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training closest partners is the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, a provincial non-profit organization that represents the interests of literacy practitioners, administrators, volunteers and learners.

The network's mandate is to promote and develop literacy by providing information, encouraging communication, and acting as a liaison with individuals, institutions, organizations and government. The network also raises the public's awareness of the importance of literacy issues and activities. The network, which is based in Saskatoon, provides an information service and networking system to the literacy community.

*The Saskatchewan Literacy Network acts as a clearinghouse for literacy resources, programs, activities and events, and works with government and the provincial literacy system to promote and develop literacy programs and services throughout Saskatchewan.*

Although the network receives most of its funding from the National Literacy Secretariat, the organization also raises money to employ a full-time executive director and administrative support person.



## The Regina Public Library

The Regina Public Library's literacy program has been recognized nationally and provincially for its distinctive program model and for its promotion of literacy awareness.

The Regina Public Library has provided literacy services to its clients since 1973. The heart of the library's literacy programming is one-on-one tutoring sessions that follow the Literacy Volunteers of America model. The library recruits volunteers from the community, provides them with at least 16 hours of training, and then matches them with learners. Each year, the library brings together about 600 volunteers with as many learners. About half of the participants in the library's program are second-language learners. At any given time, there are about 200 people enrolled in the library's literacy program.

*Nationally, the library was recognized by the Movement for Canadian Literacy, the Canadian Library Trustees Association, and the International Reading Association. In June 1995, the Library received the Saskatchewan Literacy Award of Merit for excellence and leadership in literacy programming.*

In 1987, the library board reaffirmed its commitment to literacy programming by declaring it the top priority in adult programming and reallocating staff time and operational budgets to implement a city-wide program in its eight branches. The library has the equivalent of eight full-time staff members providing literacy services throughout the library system.

The library's literacy program is headed by the Central Branch's Learning Centre, which coordinates the literacy programs at all eight branches of the library. The Central Branch's resources include a computer lab with lower-level literacy software, and a large collection of literacy materials accessible to tutors, learners and the general public. These literacy programs range from lower level literacy training to Grade 12 equivalency programs, and are provided free of charge.

### *Corporate Definition Derby unites library and business*

The staff of the Regina Public Library are working to increase the awareness of literacy as an economic and business issue in Regina's business community. One of the staff's most successful public awareness and fundraising events is the annual Corporate Definition Derby, which brings corporate teams together for an evening of entertainment.

## READ Saskatoon

Established in 1979, READ Saskatoon is an independent, community-based organization that provides free tutoring to individuals who want to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The organization is not affiliated with any institution or library, and operates without a central office.



READ Saskatoon also operates an outreach literacy program from the Friendship Learning Centre. Last year, READ Saskatoon received federal project funding to help the organization further develop the Literacy Outreach Plan and to provide literacy services in community-based locations for youths who are at risk. In 1995, READ Saskatoon worked with the Saskatoon Interagency Planning Committee to implement the Inner City Preschool Family Literacy Project.

## **Regional Colleges**

The bulk of Saskatchewan's literacy grant money goes to the province's nine regional colleges to provide literacy programming to Saskatchewan's smaller cities and rural areas. The regional college programs meet the communities' needs by offering volunteer tutoring sessions, drop-in learning centres, classroom instruction, computer-assisted literacy training, and community outreach programs.

Provincial literacy grants pay for coordinator and instructor salaries, tutor training, and literacy materials for volunteers and tutors. Like all literacy programs in Saskatchewan, the regional colleges also rely on other funding to support their literacy programs.

## **The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST)**

SIAST offers literacy programming at its four campuses. Each campus provides a drop-in learning centre where learners can schedule time with literacy instructors and tutors.

All campus programs are filled to capacity and report waiting lists for literacy services and a shortage of adequate literacy resources. While all campuses have access to the IBM Principles of Adult Literacy Software (PALS) program, two of the campuses also have other IBM computer and word-processing programs available in their centres, and one campus uses PLATO, a computer-assisted instructional program. In 1993-94, the campuses helped more than 300 learners increase their literacy skills.

*Each centre processes and helps its students in different ways. Factors such as philosophy, previous practices, resources, and facilities available have all contributed to each campus developing methods of meeting their communities' needs.*

At all SIAST campuses, most literacy learners have special needs. Between one-third and two-thirds of students using the services are second-language learners, either immigrants or aboriginal people, and most other participants have learning disabilities.

To address these realities, all four campuses have at least one staff person with experience teaching both English as a second language and literacy. In addition, campuses are responding to the special needs of learners who have a physical disability or who are developmentally handicapped. Each recently received a Speech-Assisted Reading and Writing

(SARAW) software program and computer station to address the needs of non-verbal learners who are not mobile.

## **Success Factors**

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In February 1993, the National Literacy Secretariat and Saskatchewan Education revised the eligibility criteria for access to federal grants, which has become an important factor in the success of Saskatchewan's literacy programming. The changes give priority to new initiatives that provide programming in the areas of family literacy, aboriginal literacy, youth-at-risk, rural transition, or workplace literacy.

As a result of these changes, literacy in Saskatchewan is gaining momentum in communities that have not had access to literacy funding in the past. Many new groups, including friendship centres, tribal councils and immigrant women, now have access to literacy funding to establish literacy programs that are relevant to community needs.

The changes also require all organizations applying for funding to become partners with at least one other literacy organization. The federal and provincial governments introduced this project partnership to broaden the communities' resource bases and to strengthen their commitment to literacy development. The partnership requirement also takes full advantage of the expertise of the province's literacy providers.

The changes have increased the number of innovative community-based literacy projects, and changed how Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training's literacy programming is delivered. Federal project funding has created new literacy programs and services in the areas of family literacy and workplace education to complement the regionally based volunteer tutor literacy program model that the province introduced in 1987.

## Budget

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The 1994-95 budget for Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training's literacy programming is as follows:

Regional college grants . . . . .	\$456,000
SIAST annual grant . . . . .	140,000
WEST program . . . . .	72,000
READ Saskatoon . . . . .	47,000
Regina Public Library . . . . .	42,000
<i>On Our Way</i> learner newspaper . . . . .	10,000
Circle Project . . . . .	7,000
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$774,000</u></b>

In addition, the province spends an additional \$70,000 on administrative costs to deliver literacy programming, which is not included in the provincial literacy grant structure.

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## **The Yukon Territory: A Multicultural Literacy Landscape**

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The 1989 Statistics Canada adult literacy survey did not provide data on the literacy levels of the people of the Yukon territory. Because there is no Yukon-specific information available, the territory is looking into possibilities for measuring its population's literacy levels, especially in the small, isolated communities.

The Yukon government recognizes the need to develop and deliver literacy programming in English, French and eight aboriginal languages. The territory has a population of about 30,000 people: two-thirds live in Whitehorse, and the rest are scattered throughout the territory's 20 rural communities, many of which are located in remote areas. One-quarter of the territory's population is aboriginal, and most of the 14 aboriginal communities are located in rural areas. Each aboriginal community has its own distinct political status and priorities, including developing literacy in aboriginal languages.

*The Yukon is a multicultural society.  
Literacy in the languages of these cultures  
is necessary to maintain them.*

—Yukon Literacy Strategy

There are statistics available on the educational rates of Yukoners and on the differences between urban and rural populations. Eight percent of Whitehorse residents and 19 percent of rural residents have not completed Grade 9. Among the Yukon's aboriginal people, 32 percent have not completed Grade 9 and 73 percent have not completed high school.

About 10 percent of Yukon families have at least one parent whose first language is French. This Francophone community is engaged in French-language literacy programming.

### **Structure of Literacy Programming**

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Yukon Education's Advanced Education Branch is responsible for the territory's literacy programming.

In 1993, the government released the *Yukon Literacy Strategy*, which outlined the territory's literacy objectives and priorities. The key priorities identified were:

- establishing community-based basic literacy programs;
- introducing workplace literacy programs and making literacy part of ongoing employment skills training; and
- expanding the combination of literacy training, adult basic education and life-skills training.

The Yukon is in the process of implementing this strategy, and is still developing its literacy programming. The Advanced Education Branch provides funding for projects that teach people basic literacy skills and that make literacy training part of social, community and economic development. For 1995-96, the Yukon's literacy priorities include fostering literacy initiatives among aboriginal communities, and continuing to provide core support to Yukon Learn, a non-profit agency that supports volunteer tutoring and promotes literacy throughout the territory.

## **Community Literacy Programs**

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In past years, facilities for formal literacy programming were inaccessible for residents of many rural communities, and tutors were not always available. For these reasons, the territorial government has recognized that basic literacy programs in small rural communities work best when there is substantial community ownership, so that the communities can tailor the programs to meet their specific training needs.

*Everyone has the right to a basic education, and literacy skills are an important part of a basic education. All areas of literacy improvement deserve the support of educators, training institutions, government and the public.*

—Yukon Literacy Strategy

The territory therefore supports adult literacy activities that community groups start and maintain. Yukon Learn is the main organization that provides literacy training in the territory, and Yukon College also provides some literacy training. Another organization, the Literacy Advisory Group, provides the territorial government with advice on literacy policy and programming.

## **Yukon Learn**

Yukon Learn is a community-based organization that delivers literacy programs throughout the territory. The territorial government provides core funding to Yukon Learn to provide a number of literacy activities.

By matching volunteer tutors with learners, Yukon Learn provides one-on-one, first-language literacy services and peer tutoring to individuals in Whitehorse and several rural communities. The organization also offers English-as-a-second-language training and conducts a number of special projects. Yukon Learn has four part-time community coordinators for Dawson, Haines Junction, Watson Lake and the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, who coordinate tutor-learner matches in their assigned communities.

In exchange for receiving core funding from the territorial government's Advanced Education Branch, Yukon Learn provides the territorial government with an annual report detailing its activities. The organization also receives funding from the National Literacy Secretariat.

Through a three-year development initiative, Yukon Learn is helping aboriginal communities become involved in literacy programming by offering the services of its coordinators. Three aboriginal projects are currently operating, and several others are in the developmental stage.

## **Yukon College**

Yukon College is the sole institution delivering adult education in the Yukon. The college has a main campus in Whitehorse, on-site programs at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and the Aboriginal Friendship Centre, and campuses in 15 communities. The college's academic upgrading program includes some instruction in basic literacy, life-skills development and college preparation.

## **The Literacy Advisory Group**

In 1992, the Advanced Education Branch appointed the Coalition for Yukon Literacy, now called the Literacy Advisory Group, to provide advice on literacy policy and programs to the Yukon government.

The Literacy Advisory Group is an informal, Whitehorse-based group, made up of individuals who are involved in literacy programming, and which meets every three months. Members include representatives from Yukon Learn, Yukon College, the Advanced Education Branch, and the territory's aboriginal and Francophone communities.

In previous years, the group was involved in making funding decisions with the territorial government. Since it no longer directly approves funding projects, the Literacy Advisory Group is rethinking its advisory role.

## **Creative Partnerships**

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The territorial government is forging partnerships with the major players in the literacy field. Since the Yukon is still developing its literacy programming, the territorial government finds it useful to bring people together from various segments of the literacy community to discuss their activities, and to provide funding to projects that promote these partnerships.

For example, Yukon Education is funding a manager's position at the House of Learning, a non-profit educational society of and for members of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation. Yukon Learn is also working with the territory's Public Schools Branch, starting a pilot family



literacy project for pre-schoolers and their parents. The school provides a classroom free of charge after the regular school day.

## **Budget**

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Yukon Education's literacy budget varies from year to year. In 1995-96, the budget was \$210,000, with \$140,000 provided to Yukon Learn as a core grant. The territorial government used the remaining \$70,000 to fund special projects and to arrange coordinator programming.

## **Staff**

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One employee of Yukon Education's Advanced Education Branch works part-time on literacy programming.

## **Contacts**

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